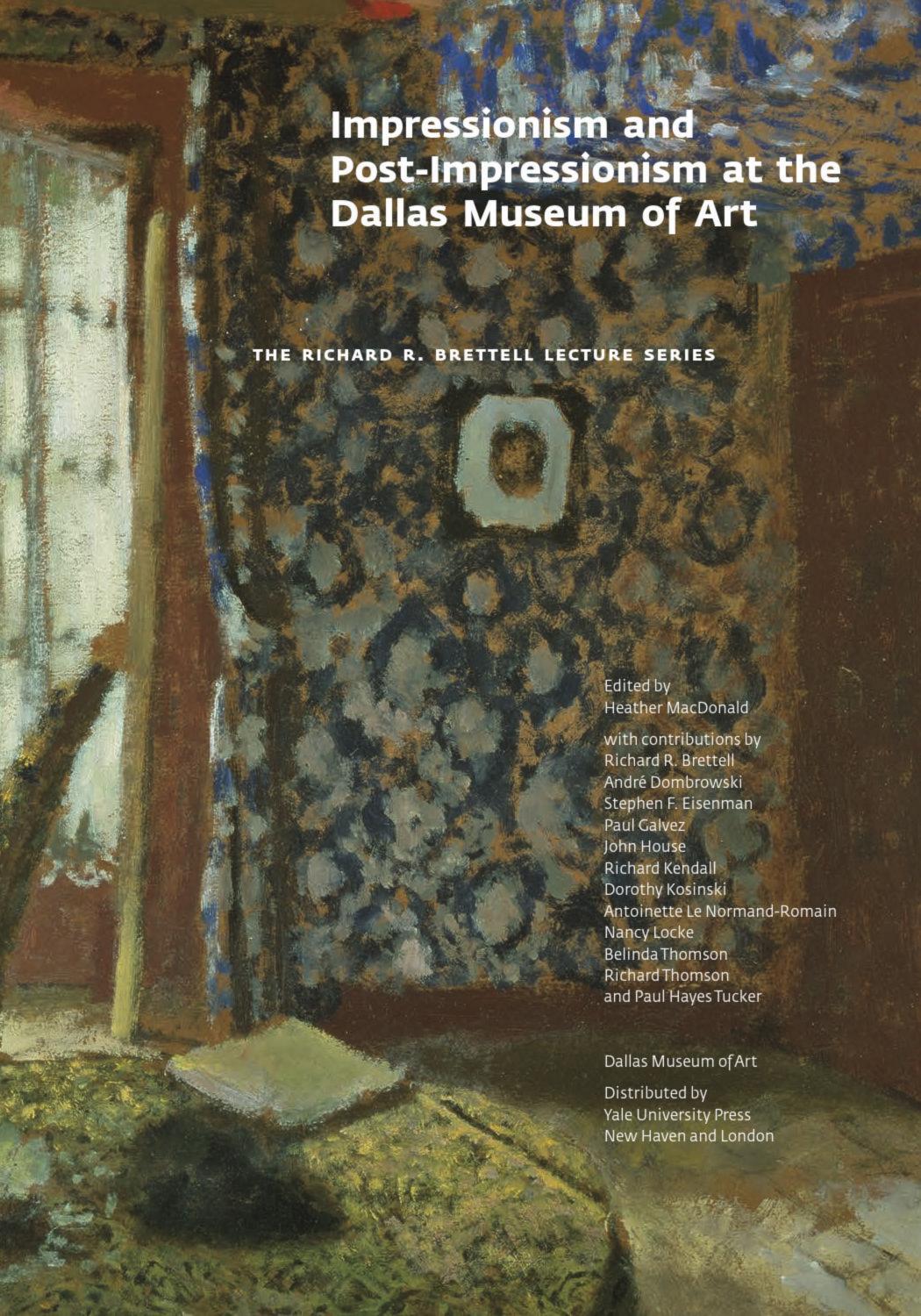


Impressionism and Post-Impressionism at the Dallas Museum of Art

THE RICHARD R. BRETTELL LECTURE SERIES







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#### FOREWORD

Maxwell L. Anderson
The Eugene McDermott Director
Dallas Museum of Art

The Richard R. Brettell Lecture Series had its origins in paired acts of generosity. In 1993, Carolyn Horchow approached Jay Gates, the director of the Dallas Museum of Art, about making a gift to the Museum in honor of the sixty-fifth birthday of her husband, the DMA trustee Roger Horchow. Her gift would create an endowment to support an annual series of scholarly lectures on European art, and she wished the series to be named for their good friend Richard R. ("Rick") Brettell, the Museum's former director. Gates aptly described the gift as "a fitting and lasting tribute to Rick's ability to communicate his passion about art," and Brettell gave the inaugural lecture, on Paul Gauguin's painting *Under the Pandanus* (I Raro te Oviri), in October of the following year. Rick's infectious excitement and ceaseless curiosity about art continues to inspire his many friends and admirers, both in Dallas and in the wider scholarly community. With her gift, Carolyn Horchow created the perfect forum with which to honor his life's work in the study of European art and to extend his legacy.

The present volume of essays, drawn from the past four years of the Richard R. Brettell Lecture Series, represents the collective scholarship of twelve art historians, each of whom was invited to lecture at the Museum about a single work or group of important works in our collection. The topics covered, beginning with Gustave Courbet's exquisite Fox in the Snow and ending with an eclectic group of images spanning the career of Edouard Vuillard, mirror in many ways the emphasis of Brettell's own art historical career. Together, the twelve essays serve as a scholarly tribute to the most important realist, impressionist, and post-impressionist works in the Museum's collections. They bring into focus for us paintings collected early in our institution's history—such as Claude Monet's Seine at Lavacourt, which entered the DMA collections in 1938—and our most recent acquisitions, such as Léon Frédéric's Nature, discussed in this volume by Dorothy Kosinski, who, in her former position as the Barbara Thomas Lemmon Curator of European Art, was responsible for bringing the painting to Dallas in 2007. The essays contained in this volume represent the kind of original scholarship on the collections of the Dallas Museum of Art that is the raison d'être of the Brettell Lecture Series, and this first publication of Brettell Lectures will set a high standard for our work in the coming years.

My thanks for making this volume possible must begin with the late Carolyn Horchow and her husband, Roger Horchow, whose generosity and friendship have had such an enduring influence on the Museum and on the city of Dallas. Since inaugurating the series in 1994, Rick Brettell has remained a steadfast partner with the Museum in planning the lectures and has been integral to the publication of this volume. Ruth and Jay A. Pack, fellow enthusiasts for the art of impressionism, made a generous gift to support the publication.

I would like to acknowledge all of the contributing authors for sharing their scholarship with us not once but twice, first in person, with their public lectures at the Museum, and then through their thoughtfully revised essays in this volume. The publication has been shepherded over the past two years by Heather MacDonald, who also helped to plan each of the lectures. We owe thanks for this refined volume to the meticulous work of the copyeditor Frances Bowles and the elegant design by Hal Kugeler. It has taken the combined efforts of many staff members at the Dallas Museum of Art to make this publication possible. In particular I would like to thank Olivier Meslay and Tamara Wootton-Bonner for steering the process, Eric Zeidler and Martha MacLeod for their tireless management of each detail of text and image, Giselle Castro-Brightenburg and Brad Flowers for providing beautiful photography, and Hillary Bober for locating key documents and images in our archives. I would also like to thank the members of the Museum's staff who work each year to make the Brettell Lecture Series an ongoing success—Carolyn Bess, Carl Daniel, Stacey Lizotte, Liz Menz, John Shipman, and John Toles—and the former staff member Lisa Kays.

In combining new scholarship from the academy with an intense focus on the Museum's collection, this publication represents an innovative approach. It joins a number of other volumes that the Dallas Museum of Art has recently published celebrating its permanent collection, including new catalogues of our holdings of African, South and Southeast Asian, and Indonesian art. As we mark the twentieth anniversary of the launching of the Richard R. Brettell Lecture Series, we look forward to many decades of future research, scholarship, and publications devoted to our evolving collections.

#### INTRODUCTION

Heather MacDonald
The Lillian and James H. Clark
Associate Curator of European Art
Dallas Museum of Art

When Richard R. Brettell arrived at the Dallas Museum of Art in 1988 as the newly appointed director, he represented a new model of leadership for the Museum. His career to that point had been divided between positions in the university and the museum, and in both arenas he had established himself as an important voice in the searching reappraisal of impressionist and postimpressionist art that was under way during the 1970s and 1980s. After writing a dissertation on Camille Pissarro at Yale University, Brettell joined the faculty of the University of Texas in 1976. During his time in Austin, Brettell curated several exhibitions, including a monographic survey of Pissarro's work, hinting at his future pivot to a museum career. In 1980, Brettell left the University of Texas for the Art Institute of Chicago, where he served for eight years as the Searle Curator of European Painting. During this time, he co-organized several historically important exhibitions, including A Day in the Country: Impressionism and the French Landscape in 1984 and The Art of Paul Gauguin in 1988.1 In short, Brettell came to Dallas as a scholarly museum director, one with wide-ranging interests and a deep expertise in European art of the later nineteenth century.

Over the previous decade, the Dallas Museum of Art had experienced extraordinary growth. Externally, the greatest transformation to the Museum had been the relocation in 1984 from its old home in Fair Park to its current building in the Downtown Arts District. Internally, the transformations had been equally momentous. In fact, the decade between 1978 and 1988 represented, for its collection of European art, the fastest period of growth in the Museum's history.

This collection had rather modest origins, and in the mid-1970s it included only a handful of paintings or sculptures of any significance, among them Claude Monet's Seine at Lavacourt, acquired surprisingly early in 1938 (see Tucker, pp. 61–71 in the present volume), and Camille Pissarro's Apple Picking, purchased with the Munger Fund in 1955 (see Eisenman, pp. 97–107). By the mid-1980s, though, this collection would more than double, growing from fewer than one hundred European paintings and sculptures to more than 240, with an impressive number of the new acquisitions being works of real importance.

This expansion was driven by a series of extraordinary gifts. First, in 1975, Mrs. John B. O'Hara left a substantial bequest to the Foundation for the Arts, a unique private foundation that had been established in 1963 to hold title to works of art owned by the Dallas Museum for Contemporary Arts after that institution merged with the Dallas Museum of Fine Arts, which later became the Dallas Museum of Art, Since then, the Foundation for the Arts has continued to receive substantial gifts of works of art on behalf of the Museum. The O'Hara gift, however, expanded the Foundation's activities by establishing its first endowment fund, specifically intended for the purchase of eighteenthand nineteenth-century art. Initially, the acquisitions proposed to its board in 1978 by the adjunct curator William B. Jordan were modest: Turkish Horse, a bronze sculpture by Antoine-Louis Barye, and Information (General Desaix and the Peasant), a small genre painting by Jean-Louis-Ernest Meissonier. By the next year, however, the impact of the O'Hara Fund began to be felt when Jordan proposed the acquisition of a major canvas, Gustave Courbet's majestic Fox in the Snow (see Galvez, pp. 13-23). This purchase presaged an impressive campaign of acquisitions by the Foundation for the Arts over the next decade.

While this campaign of collection building was under way, an even more astonishing growth of the Museum's European art collection took place thanks to a series of major gifts and bequests. Between 1975 and 1984, Lillian and James H. Clark donated nearly twenty paintings and sculptures from their legendary collection of European modernism, and in 1987, the Hoblitzelle Foundation donated more than twenty old master paintings from the collection of Esther and Karl Hoblitzelle, works that had been on loan to the Museum since the 1930s. In the field of impressionism and post-impressionism, though, the scope of gifts to the Museum was even more substantial.

In 1981, the Meadows Foundation, Inc., gave the Museum nearly forty works of art on behalf of the estate of Algur H. Meadows, a former trustee. Meadows had already made major gifts to the Museum of old master, modern, and contemporary art, and in 1978 he had funded the acquisition of Édouard Manet's Portrait of Isabelle Lemonnier (see Locke, pp. 49–59). Among the works given from his estate in 1981 were two paintings by Monet, a tondo Water Lilies and a landscape Valle Buona, Bordighera; Berthe Morisot's Winter (Woman with a Muff); Henri Fantin-Latour's Flowers and Grapes; Camille Pissarro's Peasant Woman Carrying Two Bundles of Hay; and Edouard Vuillard's Interior (see B. Thomson, pp. 145–56).

The Meadows Foundation's gift was followed shortly by the historic gift of the collection formed by the Hungarian-German publisher Emery Reves and his Texas-born wife, Wendy, who worked with the Museum's director Harry S. Parker III to complete the donation of more than fourteen hundred works from their collection to the Museum in 1985. The gift included thirty-eight impressionist and post-impressionist paintings, twelve European sculptures, and a number of important pastels, drawings, and watercolors. The significant works of art in the Reves Collection are too many to list here, but among those discussed in this volume are Paul Cézanne's Abandoned House near Aix-en-Provence (see Dombrowski, pp. 85–95), Prostitutes, a pastel by Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec (see R. Thomson, pp. 121–31), Pierre-Auguste Renoir's two portraits of his lover



Richard R. Brettell at the Dallas Museum of Art in 1988

Lise Tréhot (see House, pp. 25–35), a large pastel over monotype and a painting of ballet dancers by Edgar Degas (see Kendall, pp. 73–83), four sculptures by Auguste Rodin (see Le Normand-Romain, pp. 109–19), and an early painting and late pastel by Vuillard (see B. Thomson, pp. 145–56).

Brettell arrived in Dallas just after this tidal wave of gifts, but he continued the momentum of collection building with important acquisitions of nineteenth-century works of art, including Max Liebermann's monumental Swimmers, purchased with the O'Hara Fund of the Foundation for the Arts (see Brettell, pp. 37-47). In many ways, though, it was Brettell's task to oversee the study, research, and publication of the Museum's newly expanded collections. His tenure in Dallas afforded Brettell scope to explore his diverse curatorial interests (and he took advantage of that freedom to work on exhibition projects ranging from the art of Georgia O'Keeffe to nineteenth-century Russian painting to African-American art), but he continued to organize and champion major exhibitions devoted to impressionist art in which the Museum's new collections featured prominently. These included Impressionist and Modern Masters in Dallas: Monet to Mondrian in 1989, The Rise of Landscape Painting in France: Corot to Monet in 1991, and The Impressionist and the City: Pissarro's Series Paintings in 1993.3 Brettell also wrote a full catalogue of the paintings, sculptures, and works on paper in the Wendy and Emery Reves Collection.

In 1998, Brettell returned to his interrupted academic career, and he now holds the Margaret McDermott Distinguished Chair in Art and Aesthetics at the University of Texas at Dallas. His arrival at the Museum in 1988, at a pivotal moment when the institution was just beginning to feel the import of its greatly expanded holdings of nineteenth-century European art, initiated an enduring tradition of scholarly research and publication in this field. Later exhibitions such as Degas to Picasso: The Artist and the Camera in 2000 and Van Gogh's Sheaves of Wheat in 2006, organized by the then-curator of European art Dorothy Kosinski, have taken this commitment in new directions. The

collections of realist, impressionist, and post-impressionist art have also continued to expand, if at a less torrential pace than in the 1980s, with the acquisition of works by Félix Vallotton, Théodore Rousseau, Jean Alexandre Joseph Falguière, Fantin-Latour, Odilon Redon, Emile-Antoine Bourdelle, Camille Corot, Gustave Caillebotte, Paul Signac, and Léon Frédéric (for this last, see Kosinski, pp. 133–43).

Over the past two decades, the Museum has been able to build on Brettell's legacy of scholarship as a result of the generosity of Carolyn Horchow. Her gift, in 1993, inaugurated the Richard R. Brettell Lecture Series, with Brettell himself delivering the first lecture on Paul Gauguin, an artist who has long been a constant in his scholarly universe. Later lectures in the series have featured many of Brettell's key interlocutors over a career of thinking and writing about impressionist, post-impressionist, and modernist art, including Yve-Alain Bois, Lynn Gamwell, Joachim Pissarro, Griselda Pollock, George Shackelford, and Charles Stuckey. In recent years, and at Brettell's urging, a younger generation of scholars has joined this group, bringing new perspectives and modes of interpretation to the attention of Dallas audiences.

This volume represents a collective effort to expand the influence of the Richard R. Brettell Lecture Series on both the Museum and the wider scholarly community by inviting scholars, over the course of four years and twelve lectures, to focus on an aspect of the Dallas Museum of Art's collections. As you read the revised versions of the lectures that make up this anthology, you will discover not only a group of remarkable works of art but also a diverse range of scholarly voices reflecting the current conversations about impressionist, post-impressionist, and other ninteenth-century European art that are taking place in universities and museums around the world.<sup>4</sup>

Brettell once told an interviewer that "looking at art is intimacy. . . . And I think that the more that a museum can be a place for discourse . . . the better it can be for the community." It was this spirit of intimate fellowship around the study of works of art that inspired the Richard R. Brettell Lecture Series and has kept it a vital force in the life of the Museum for the past twenty years.

- 1. Brettell et al. 1984; and Brettell et al. 1988.
- Brettell would spearhead the dramatic expansion of that facility during his tenure, with the addition of the 140,000-squarefoot Hamon Building, opened in 1993.
- Brettell 1989; Champa et al. 1991; Brettell et al. 1992.
- Audio recordings of the lectures are available on the website of the Dallas Museum of Art.
- Richard Brettell, interview by Natalie H. (Schatzie) and George T. Lee Jr., Dallas Museum of Art Oral History Collection, Dallas Museum of Art Archives, transcript, p. 16.



# Hunting High and Low

Gustave Courbet's Fox in the Snow

PAUL GALVEZ

The hunting scenes and related still lifes painted by Gustave Courbet between 1857 and 1861 remain an enigma for art historical interpretation. The way in which Courbet puts animals instead of human beings at center stage is often met with embarrassment, if not outright hostility. This is true even of the artist's greatest advocates. In 1861, the same year that the Dallas Fox in the Snow (figs. 1 and 5) was shown at the Salon, Courbet's friend the author Champfleury, after seeing an earlier painting The Dead Deer (1857, The Hague, Netherlands, Mesdag Collection), wrote that "man is more interesting than the animal and those who devote themselves exclusively to the representation of chickens and sheep are inferior artists."

Champfleury's remarks are typical of art criticism, then and now. In the aftermath of Courbet's independent one-man exhibition, the so-called Pavilion of Realism, at the Universal Exposition in 1855, almost every major writer seemed compelled to propose a definition of Realism. Despite the diversity of opinion produced, there was a consensus on the basics: an image of life as it is lived outside châteaux and places of myth; characters who are more down-to-earth than heroic, more quotidian than theatrical; a style that is simple, one could almost say flat, rather than exuberant, flowery, or poetic; an art that will not think twice about leaving the capital for the countryside, if that's where it leads the artist. Within this general scheme, there was room for variation. Some leaned toward nature, others toward the urban poor. Some emphasized homely virtue, others craved the most sordid details. Some thought only of the novel, others preferred that painting lead the way. Almost without exception, man was at the center of discussion.<sup>2</sup>

In this referendum on Realism, it is clear that, as the cliché goes, art in the service of mankind ("l'art pour l'homme") replaces art for art's sake ("l'art pour l'art"). But where in all this is there room for the reality of a fox biting off a chunk of its prey? In the anthropocentric universe of Realism, how can one even begin to imagine a place for a painting like Fox in the Snow?

# 1857: REALISM AT THE CROSSROADS

One can perhaps begin to answer this complicated question by looking at pictures that are contemporaneous with the debates. What is the pictorial response of an artist such as Courbet, and how does it relate to the critical response in

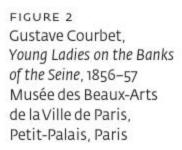
OPPOSITE
FIGURE 1
Gustave Courbet,
Fox in the Snow, 1860
Detail of figure 5

print? Most would agree that it was in the Salon of 1857 that, with his submission of Young Ladies on the Banks of the Seine (fig. 2) and The Quarry (fig. 3), the image of the hunt in Courbet's oeuvre was inaugurated. Utter opposites at first glance, the two pictures make much more sense as a pair when read in light of realist criticism. At one level, they both adhere to the dictum prescribing unelevated subject matter. What could be more undignified than two women in undergarments cavorting publicly on a riverbank? And what could be less lofty than a huntsman privately surveying his recent kill?

Beyond the level of content, however, is their realism at the level of form. One of the other criteria of realist discourse is that it be unmannered, anticlassical, and untutored in traditions of fine art drawing and composition—in short, brute. In Young Ladies, undressing leads to an explosion of fabric in which all relation to the female body is seemingly lost. In The Quarry, the hunter's slaughtered prey, like the women in their ample folds of dress, forms a corporeal mass that has nothing to do with the nude, that ne plus ultra of beaux-arts training. It is almost as if fashion and fur have become pretexts for a symphony of textures wherein the artist's sumptuous touch reaches a joyous crescendo.

In these subjects of sexual desire and animality, respectively, Courbet broaches two kinds of experience that are primarily visceral. There is no doubt that the gargantuan <code>Battle</code> of the <code>Stags</code> (fig. 4), shown, like <code>Foxin</code> the <code>Snow</code>, at the <code>Salon</code> of 1861, follows a similar trajectory. The story behind its conception is well known. While staying in Frankfurt in 1859–60, Courbet went on daylong hunts in the local forests, where the primal cries of the hunted stags enthralled him. He created several large-scale paintings of stags, which were shown at various exhibitions in the following years. They were such a success that one even heard of the government's planning to buy <code>Battle</code> of the <code>Stags</code> for the Musée du Luxembourg.

By anthropomorphizing the beasts, Battle of the Stags offers one possible way that an animal painting could fit into a realist definition of art. Instead of Hector





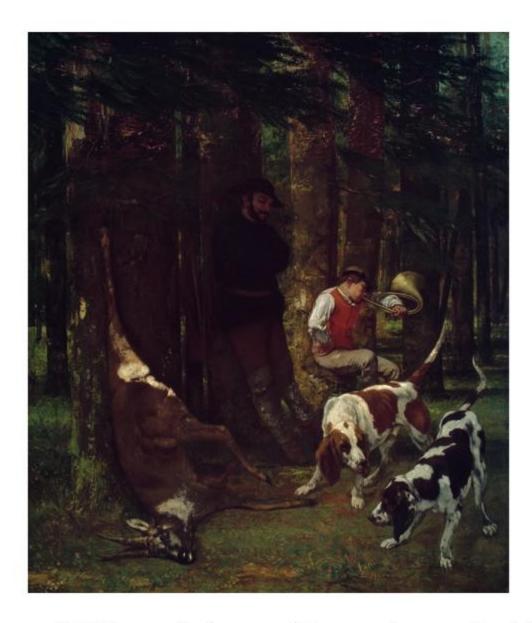


FIGURE 3 Gustave Courbet, The Quarry, 1856 Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

and Achilles outside the gates of Troy, we witness antlered titans in an equally brutal battle to the death in a German forest. Of course, for Courbet, ever the savvy exhibitor, an allegorical reading of the image as a life-and-death struggle was probably intentional. The huge scale, combined with Courbet's failure to finish any large figure paintings for the 1861 Salon, practically guaranteed that critical attention would gravitate toward Battle of the Stags. The strategy worked. For perhaps the first time in his career, there was almost universal praise.



FIGURE 4 Gustave Courbet, Battle of the Stags (Le Rut du printemps, combat des cerfs), 1861 Musée d'Orsay, Paris

#### REAL, MORE OR LESS

Fox in the Snow could be read in just such as fashion, that is, as an image torn between high-art pretense and realist subject matter. Imagine it as an allegory: the fox overpowers its victim, dismembering it. Is this not how the abuse of authority functions, the violent assertion of power over another, leaving the victim without the capacity to resist or even to react, metaphorically helpless? For the Salon of 1861, the caricaturist Galetti reimagines the central figure as a forlorn, headless fox (fig. 6).6 The title, Episode in the Retreat from Russia, gives the reconfigured image a specific context: Napoleon's disastrous campaign of 1812, when the most brutal of winters almost destroyed the French army after his invasion of Russia had failed. Many of the paintings and prints of the era made note of the increasing numbers of maimed and mutilated soldiers coming back from the front. Clearly, by cutting off the fox's head, the caricaturist was comparing Courbet's poor fox to a military man as imagined by Antoine-Jean Gros or Théodore Géricault (fig. 7), a comparison that dovetailed with Courbet's reputation as a painter who was critical of officialdom and the regime of Napoleon III.7

One notes how much the image had to be altered in order to load it with such historical baggage. To make the fox a victim, its own prey, the wild rodent, had to be eliminated from the picture. The fox's body, tensed for action in the painting as it bites off the leg of its prey, is, in the caricature, utterly still, as if fresh from the guillotine. It is hard to ascertain the exact purpose of Galetti's remaking of the scene. Was the visual presence of the maimed animal in the original painting too small, too inconsequential to convey the pain of

FIGURE 5 Gustave Courbet. Fox in the Snow, 1860 Dallas Museum of Art



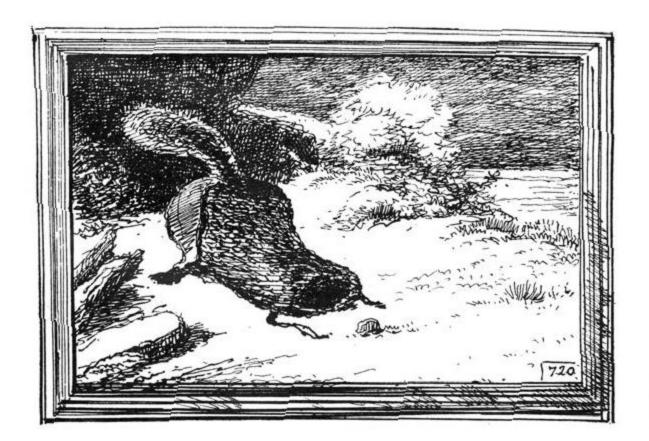


FIGURE 6 Galetti, Episode in the Retreat from Russia, 1861

victimhood so vividly displayed by the solitary headless fox in the drawing? Or was the caricaturist perhaps mocking Courbet, saying, essentially, that no matter how delicately rendered an animal's fur, it nonetheless comes across to the viewer as something dead, lifeless-beheaded, so to speak-and thus unequal to the miraculous re-creation of lifelike human figures that for so long had been the glory of Western mimetic representation?

There is another way to read the painting's realism. In 1859, writing to his compatriot-in-exile Max Buchon, Courbet mentions in passing the recent receipt of Champfleury's short story "The Wax-Figure Man." At first glance,



FIGURE 7 Théodore Géricault, Return from Russia, 1818 Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven

the story reinforces the definitions of Realism proposed earlier. The narrator, an aficionado of wax-figure shows, recounts a visit to a rather dilapidated one on the Champs-Élysées sometime during the 1840s. This particular entertainment attracts none of the posh clientele strolling between the place de la Concorde and the triumphal arch of L'Étoile. It is an example of the kind of popular spectacle that is sadly, for the storyteller, disappearing from Paris. The narrator laments the fact that the mannequins in the windows of hairdressers' shops and a new generation of false dentures now surpass the wax figure's ability to mimic the details of the human body. Such sympathy for traditions that are dwindling in the face of modern cosmetics aligns him with the realists' own nostalgia for premodern forms of popular art.9

The narrator recognizes the wax figure, whose outstretched arms and alarmed face first attracted his attention, as one of a particular type: Le Criminel. Using his connoisseur's knowledge, he notes that this particular figure was originally an innocent bystander in a larger crime scene composed of other wax figures. Only later, once separated from the other figures, does the witness turn into a perpetrator. This transition—in which the form of the figure is conserved, but not its identity—becomes the recurring leitmotif over the course of the rest of the story. Over and over again, the realism of a particular representation is understood, not as an image made after an original model, but as an image in which any ties to the original have been forcibly severed. Le Criminel's real crime is not a transgression of the law; it is the fact that "his old gestures and cries had been conserved without keeping the original meaning." 10

While marveling at the showman's array of wax figures, the narrator suddenly goes off on a tangent, remembering his childhood fear of just these kinds of figures." This digression makes no sense from the point of the narrative. It stalls the action of the narrator's tour. But it is entirely consistent with the version of realism embodied by Le Criminel. The narrator attributes his mortal dread to the doll's imperfect reincarnation of various bodies. All those membra disjecta—eyes, legs, torsos, and arms—remind him of the morgue and even the slaughterhouse. The fear arises because for him the wax figure never completely transcends the presence of the original bodies; the more obviously these earlier forms invade the most recent one, the more disturbing their new appearance.

In one of the story's most telling passages, the narrator traces his fear to "the appearance of life that is not life, of this appearance of reality that is not reality, of this thing more complete than painting and sculpture, which however is less complete than painting and sculpture." How can a figure be both more real and less real than reality itself? In classical art theory, the way to make the most beautiful figure is to choose, from the pool of all possible figures, the most beautiful parts. Once assembled and combined, these parts will fuse into the ideal body consisting of only the best nature has to offer. The whole, in theory, will be greater (that is, more beautiful, more realistic) than the sum of its parts. In this sense, the classically constructed figure is "more real than reality itself." But as art theorists discovered as early as the Renaissance, the summing up of parts can also produce monsters. An example from the nineteenth century would be Frankenstein, who was nothing if

not the imperfect assemblage of a powerful body with a mistakenly inserted mind. The doll that is "less real than reality itself" is thus a Franken-figure composed of realistic parts that fail to produce a convincing image of the real. Perhaps, then, what constitutes the realism of a wax figure such as the criminal is that it both confirms and denies the mimetic goal of an idealized whole composed of real parts. Although one could argue, as art theorists have done from Leon Battista Alberti onward, that this is the condition of all representation, what the wax figure does more than most images is to make evident the violence (that is, the crime) necessarily entailed in the act of figuration.

#### NATURE MORTE

It is highly unlikely that Courbet, when he read "Wax-Figure Man," saw in it a statement of his own principles. Instead he probably would have been delighted at having such a prominent writer publish a story in which one of the characters is the painter himself. In the second part of the story, a character named Courbet joins the narrator in a tour of the masked balls on the outskirts of Paris following the 1848 Revolution, and, at one of them, they run into the caretaker of the now-closed wax-figure show and his collection of figures.

Champfleury would later ask Courbet to illustrate one of these scenes as part of a proposed publication. The project came to nothing, which is perhaps why this particular story, unlike other work by Champfleury, goes relatively unnoticed in the Courbet literature. But, at least as it concerns the hunting pictures of the late 1850s and early 1860s, the story has much to tell us. Far from relegating the depiction of animals to a secondary status within Realism, the notion of realism as a kind of violent mistranslation elucidates several of these pictures' more "dreadful" aspects.



FIGURE 8 Gustave Courbet, Stag at Bay or Stag Taking to Water, 1861 Musée des Beaux-Arts, Marseille



Gustave Courbet, Bolting Horse, 1861 Neue Pinakothek, Munich

It has been said that Courbet's animals often sit awkwardly in their surroundings. They frequently suffer from a rigor mortis that defies the rules of gravity, with the off-putting result that many of them seem to be flying or hovering unnaturally in the air, as they are in two other paintings that Courbet submitted to the Salon of 1861: Stag at Bay or Stag Taking to Water (fig. 8) and Bolting Horse (fig. 9). The contrast between the stance of the animal and the sensitive portrayal of fur and flesh could not be more striking. The stiffness of pose evokes a taxidermist's shop; the sensuous surfaces, something still alive. Of course, this combination of the dead and the living is precisely what made the wax figure so disturbing to Champfleury.

Even when the animal's pose is closer to what one would expect, as it is in Fox in the Snow, one still feels as if the figure has been deliberately arranged or placed in the landscape. I think this is because Courbet could not resist making his landscape backgrounds as weighty and lush as the figures inhabiting them, or sometimes even more so. This is particularly true of the winter scenes, such as Fox in the Snow. When Courbet piles on his whites with the palette knife, the opaque ground is completely at odds with the translucent brown brushwork used to render the fox's fur (fig. 1). The result is a clash of textures so noticeable that the animal seems to belong to a different painterly universe from the world around it.

Paintings of animals, like still-life paintings in general, are paintings that are inherently about "life that is not life," "of reality that is not reality." A table laden with fruit or a vase filled with flowers can be the object of such a faithful depiction that one could imagine eating the apples or smelling the

roses. The artist's skill can make them more beautiful than they could ever be in the real world. In order to achieve the miracle of an image that is more real than reality, the process by which the object has been made available for representation is often hidden or denied. It is this reality—the mechanism of transfer from object to canvas, or in the case of the wax figure, from body parts to doll—that the traditional still life must disavow in order to be taken seriously. This is why it gravitates toward subjects that are already re-presented, usually on a table or in arrangements, and thus one step removed from their original context in a garden or in nature.15

The problem with hunting pictures is that their main subject is either still alive or freshly killed. One cannot look at them without wondering how the artist managed to get so close to the moment of death that is the picture's "original meaning." With a kitchen scene or still life, one can imagine the artist painting the bounty after the hunters have left. But with an action scene, the illusion is harder to pull off because the moment of death takes place within a maelstrom of activity that is difficult to capture in real time.

Unlike more pompous hunting scenes coming out of the Northern tradition, Fox in the Snow seems to depict the bodies of its animal protagonists accurately and to set them within a relatively plausible scene. Thus, the original appearance (or "original meaning") of the figures is conserved within a new pictorial configuration. In avoiding the artificial, Fox in the Snow seems to succeed where the wax figure and the still life fail miserably. But of course we all know that this success is itself a glorious illusion. We would never even think of Fox in the Snow as a work of art, as a picture of something, if that something (that is, the fox) were present in front of our eyes as a real, living thing. Thanks to the work of Gilbert Titeux, we now know that Courbet painted his stags after specimens from a natural history museum. 16 If he was consistent in his practice, he most likely also used a dead animal to paint the Dallas picture (perhaps even the same one he used in the more traditional Dead Fox Hanging from a Tree in the Snow [1860s, Stockholm, Nationalmuseum]). The zoological specimen is to the hunting picture what the flower or tabletop arrangement is to still life: the intermediary by which figures are severed from their original frames of reference in order to turn them into something to be re-presented. It is also thus the means by which the violence of the initial mortal act of severing is negated and tamed.

When this negation is only partial or incomplete, the result may be dread, as in the case of Champfleury's wax figures, discomfort, as in the case of Fox in the Snow, or derision, as in the case of the ridiculous Death of the Hunted Stag (fig. 10), which Courbet painted for his own private exhibition outside the 1867 Universal Exposition. The fox in the snow is caught between a moment of death in the real world and a final re-presentation as part of a painted one, just as the wax figure is caught between the morgue and the staged performance. We like to think of nineteenth-century Realism as an art movement that gave pictorial form to the new experiences of modern life, from bustling train stations to seaside leisure to urban promenades. That these images were like the things they depicted—that is, that they were incontestably new and original and severed from any kind of historical precedent—is itself one of modernity's great myths, the myth of the New, the Modern.

Fox in the Snow is part of a genre that was outmoded by 1861 and therefore does not belong to this well-rehearsed narrative. It does, however, tell us something about the way in which representations are put together and why the transition from model to final image is not necessarily easy or unproblematic. On the contrary, it can be quite disturbing and even at times monstrous. Were Fox in the Snow a straightforward hunting picture, one with just the right amount of accepted naturalism, then it would be no more than one among many examples of this quaint genre. But because it awkwardly juxtaposes the reality of dead animal bodies with the unreality of their re-animation in a killing scene, it falls short of the unassailable, truthful depiction of the world that realist doctrine demands. Ironically, then, Fox in the Snow succeeds in shedding light on the process of re-presentation precisely because it fails to complete its task.

FIGURE 10 Gustave Courbet, The Death of the Hunted Stag (L'Hallali du cerf), 1867 Musée d'Orsay, Paris



- 1. "Mais l'homme est plus intéressant que l'animal, et ceux qui se sont voués exclusivement à la representation des poules ou des brebis sont des artistes inférieurs" (Champfleury 1860/1861, 259).
- Some of the most important examples of this trend, all written between 1855 and 1857. include Baudelaire 1985 (notes for an essay on the problem of realism; published only posthumously); Silvestre 1856; Champfleury 1855/1857; Buchon 1856/2007; Duranty 1856-57; and Castagnary 1857/1892.
- The colorful description of Battle of the Stags can be found in Courbet's letter to Frances Wey, April 29, 1861; see Courbet 1992, 192.
- 4. Courbet to his family, June 1861, ibid., 197.
- 5. Courbet to Auguste Poulet-Malasis, March 8, 1861; Courbet to Alexandre Pothey, March 30, 1861; Courbet to Wey, April 20, 1861; ibid., 189-95.

- 6. Paris Salon, 1861; Album caricatural (Paris: Librarie nouvelle, 1861); republished in Léger 1920, 40.
- 7. There would be a veritable Géricault revival in the following years, most notably in the study by Charles Clément (Clément 1866).
- 8. Courbet to Buchon. December 1859, Courbet 1992, 173. First published in Les Excentriques in 1852, the story was republished in 1856 (Champfleury 1852/1856, 298-321).
- Champfleury published seminal texts on the history of caricature, popular imagery, and folksongs. The wax figures were part of his interest in popular forms of entertainment that were on the verge of disappearing at that time.
- 10. Champfleury 1852/1856, 299.
- 11. Like Freud, Champfleury was fascinated by the expression of uncanniness in the work of E.T.A. Hoffmann, which he translated; see Hoffmann 1856.

- 12. "Je comprenais que mon effroi naïf venait de cette apparence de vie qui n'est pas la vie, de cette apparence de réalite qui n'est pas la réalité, de ce plus complet que la sculpture et la peinture, qui cependant est moins complet que la peinture et sculpture . . . " (Champfleury 1852/1856, 307).
- Shelley 1818.
- 14. He apologizes to Champfleury for being too busy to do the illustration; Courbet to Champfleury, December 1859, Courbet 1992, 171.
- 15. On the critical reception of still life in the 1860s, see Przyblyski 1995.
- 16. Titeux 2010; see also the slightly modified version in Herding and Hollein 2010.



# The Many Faces of Lise Tréhot

Pierre-Auguste Renoir's Portraits of Parisiennes

JOHN HOUSE

We know very little about Pierre-August Renoir's liaison with Lise Tréhot, the first important emotional relationship he engaged in, apart from that with his parents, for which we have any evidence whatsoever. The affair with Lise left a strong mark on the early part of Renoir's artistic career, and recent research by Marc Le Coeur and Jean-Claude Gélineau has opened up new sources of information about Lise's life and, to some extent, about their association.¹ Interestingly, the sources of the information that we had previously about Renoir's pictures of Lise were derived, indirectly, from two paintings in the Wendy and Emery Reves Collection at the Dallas Museum of Art. When they were acquired by Emery Reves, he sought out Lise's surviving relatives, who sent him the family version of her life story. Reves passed along this information to Douglas Cooper, who published it in articles that we scholars had all assumed, until about five years ago, to be entirely correct.² As it turns out, the information given by the Tréhot family to Reves and Cooper was a pack of lies.

So, we are left with a number of rather radical reconfigurations of what actually happened between the people you will be meeting as we go along, but I want to say at the start that the key question is not what Renoir and Lise got up to (though we will see evidence of that) but rather how Lise is represented in Renoir's art and the roles that Renoir invites this particular model to take on. In the paintings by Renoir that we now think represent Lise, even her facial features do not appear to remain consistent: Renoir's brush shows her as a very malleable model. The idea of the model—posing and playing, enacting various roles—is particularly important here because we see Lise in so many guises. This variety is of great interest in a broad consideration about the social position of the young Parisian woman in France at the end of the 1860s and in the early 1870s.

### SOCIAL STATUS AND THE ARTIST'S MODEL

As far as we know, Renoir and Lise met around 1866, and Lise Sewing (figs. 11 and 12) probably dates to fairly soon after that, though I think it's not the very earliest picture of Lise. It is possibly from around 1867 or 1868. Lise in a White Shawl (fig. 13) has always been believed to be the last of his paintings of her, dating to 1872. It may be one of the last, but perhaps not absolutely the last. Nonetheless, the two pictures span essentially the life of their relationship, and as they

OPPOSITE
FIGURE 11
Pierre-Auguste Renoir,
Lise Sewing, c. 1867–68
Detail of figure 12



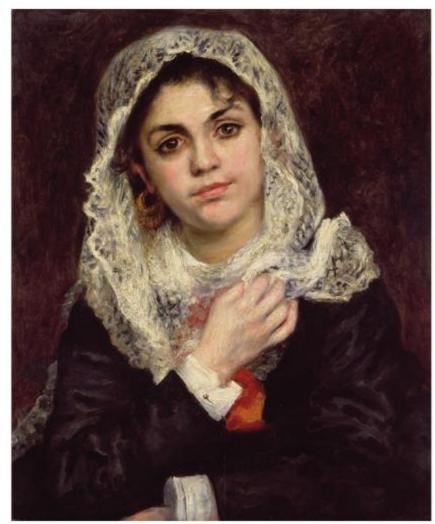


FIGURE 12 Pierre-Auguste Renoir, Lise Sewing, c. 1867-68 Dallas Museum of Art

FIGURE 13 Pierre-Auguste Renoir, Lise in a White Shawl, C. 1872 Dallas Museum of Art

were the only pictures by Renoir that Lise seems to have kept throughout her life, they clearly held a significance for her, but not, I will suggest, quite the significance that people have thought. I would like to point out right at the beginning that in each of these paintings, Lise plays a role. In Lise Sewing, she is wearing a wedding ring (though she and Renoir were certainly not married), and she is sewing with an infinitely delicately painted needle. In the later portrait, Lise is rather mysterious, wearing dark clothing and a seemingly Spanish shawl and a sort of bright red cravat and looking past us. Here the role she is playing is both exotic and, I think, not absolutely explicit.

> FIGURE 14 Photograph of Lise Tréhot in 1864 Private collection



Lise Tréhot (fig. 14) was born in March 1848, and thus when she and Renoir were definitely together, by the summer of 1866, she was eighteen years old. Renoir was twenty-five. He most likely met her through his close friend Jules Le Coeur, an amateur painter and a more serious architect, who was a little bit older than Renoir. Le Coeur was also the lover of Lise's older sister Clemence, so they were tied by a close family link (fig. 15). In Lise in a Straw Hat, probably the first of Renoir's paintings of Lise (fig. 16), she is placed by a river, and we are given just enough evidence to know that this setting is not rural but rather suburban.

The suburban river was an important setting for paintings in the 1850s, 1860s, and 1870s in France, and there is also a lot of writing during those years about boating and the activities on the riverbank. One contemporary observer, for instance, was careful to distinguish, on the one hand, the serious *canotiers* (boaters), who rowed for prizes, and, on the other hand, those who were on the river purely for pleasure. The latter rowed energetically, but "only in order to reach more quickly a quiet spot where the wine is cool, . . . the trees are green, and the bathing women can find a sandy bottom in the river and some shade. . . . These *canotiers* are accompanied by *canotières*—nimble, spruce, laughing, tireless young women who are never worried about the morrow, provided one takes them out for an excursion, feeds them well, and appears to find them pretty."

Lise in a Straw Hat is a relatively small picture, genre painting-sized and domestically scaled. It was not intended as a major exhibition picture, but rather made for sale on the commercial market. But, throughout the late 1860s and early 1870s, Renoir was also painting a sequence of large works intended for exhibition at the Paris Salon and almost exclusively devoted to Lise. It should be stressed that these were works designed by Renoir for public display, and they must be seen as major public statements by a young artist. The first of these, unfortunately, is a complete frustration: it is a painting we know that Renoir submitted to the Salon of 1866, but it was rejected by

PIGURE 15
Pierre-Auguste Renoir,
Jules Le Coeur and Clemence
Tréhot, 1867
Dallas Museum of Art

Pierre-Auguste Renoir, Lise in a Straw Hat, c. 1866 The Barnes Foundation, Philadelphia



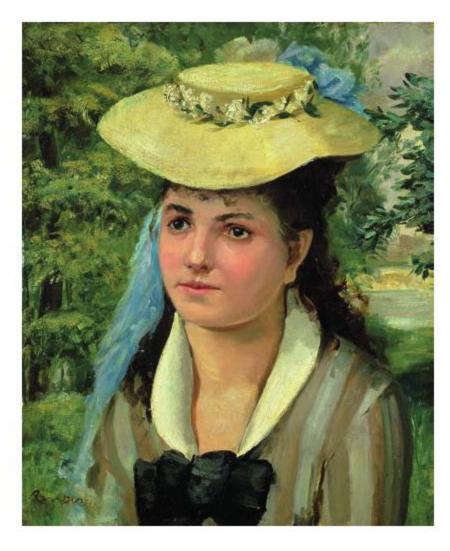




FIGURE 17 Frédéric Bazille, Bazille's Studio, rue de la Condamine, 1870 Musée d'Orsay, Paris

the jury and is now lost. We have two bits of evidence of the appearance of this picture. One is a little drawing by Le Coeur of Renoir at work on it (1866, Paris, private collection); the other is a representation of the entire picture as it appears in a painting by their friend Frédéric Bazille of his studio, where Renoir's painting is to be seen hanging on the wall in the background (fig. 17). The rejected painting itself was subsequently cut up, and all that survives is the right-hand portion, though the whereabouts of even that fragment are now unknown.

In Bazille's painting of his studio, the large size of Renoir's painting is obvious. It was a life-sized canvas, and it pays a direct tribute to Gustave Courbet, one of the great iconic figures of modern, provocative painting. It is in many ways a reworking of Courbet's famous Bathing Women, from the Salon of 1853 (Montpellier, Musée Fabre), but with one crucial difference: the seated figure in the foreground of Renoir's canvas is wearing fashionable modern clothes. Though we cannot be certain, it appears that Lise was the model for the figure in the surviving fragment and, very possibly, for both figures. Renoir's painting was rejected by the Salon jury only a year after Manet had exhibited Olympia (1863, Paris, Musée d'Orsay), which provoked fervent debates about the modern nude. I suspect that Renoir's picture was just too much for the jury to take. In response, Renoir decided to take a step backward for the following year's Salon, and he submitted Diana, again with Lise clearly serving as model (fig. 18).

Many years later, Renoir told the art dealer Ambroise Vollard that he had originally intended to do a modern nude, but then thought that it would never be accepted. He had turned his nude into Diana by adding the dead deer, the bow, and the animal skin. Actually, though, if you remove those elements, her pose makes absolutely no sense, and I suspect that this is one of those stories that he or perhaps Vollard embroidered later on. But, what he certainly has done is to take a figure, who is obviously a modern type in terms of her body and hairstyle, put her in a generic remote landscape, and given her the attributes of the ancient goddess Diana. At the same time, however,





Pierre-Auguste Renoir, Diana, 1867 National Gallery of Art, Washington

Pierre-Auguste Renoir, Lise, 1867 Museum Folkwang, Essen, Germany

it is not merely a picture of a modern Diana, but also a reworking, once again, of Courbet, in this case *The Quarry* of 1857 (see fig. 3) and any one of his many nudes in outdoor landscapes.

### THE PARISIENNE

Renoir's attempt to placate the Salon jury by adding a mythological subject to a modern nude did not produce the desired effect. Once again, his painting was rejected. The next year, 1868, Renoir for the first time had a picture of Lise accepted by the jury, and this time, it appeared simply with the title Lise (fig. 19). This picture was described at some length by Renoir's friend the art critic Zacharie Astruc:

She is the likeable Parisian girl in the woods, . . . seeking shade not for its coolness and solitude, but for the entertainments there, the ball, the pleasure garden, the fashionable restaurant. . . . The heroine has nothing rustic about her except her features. She's a brunette. She's ruddy complexioned. She's a bit plump. She's vigorous and healthy. She's not lacking in spirit, I imagine. Her eyes clearly express her native mischievousness and her incisive working-class perceptiveness.<sup>5</sup>

Here you have a whole lot of markers about both Lise and her physical environment. She is an urban girl, probably lower class, who has gone out to the woods. She is placed next to a tree on which are carved lovers' initials, and she looks to the side as if she is under that tree awaiting somebody with whom she'll go on to one of these places of entertainment mentioned by Astruc.

Now, Astruc's analysis is not about Lise's own class, although she does appear to have come from a lower-class family. The title does not give you that information, but it does suggest, by consisting of her Christian name alone, that this was not a portrait of a fashionable, bourgeois lady. Calling Lise by her first name marked her as somebody with whom the painter was on highly familiar terms. In this context, there was one other prototype for Renoir, a picture that Claude Monet had exhibited two years earlier of his mistress,

Camille Doncieux, whom he later married (fig. 20). Astruc, in fact, says that Lise is a follow-up in a way to Camille, but Renoir places his model in an outdoor setting, which carried with it a different set of associations.

Monet had said of Camille, "No, it's not a portrait. It is a picture of the young Parisienne of her period," and I think this term Parisienne is worth considering for a moment. It does, of course, mean "Parisian woman," but it was a term that had a lot of further associations, and it figured prominently in contemporary social debates. On one side were moralists who felt that Parisiennes were undermining the morality of the youth of Paris; on the other side were the fascinated gentlemen who walked along the boulevards, eyeing the passing women. In the widespread writing about the Parisienne, she is characterized as alluring, but also superficial and vain. She was constantly manipulating her own appearance and was characterized by artifice. The Parisienne, according to these writers, is always performing; she is always in front of an imaginary mirror, appraising herself. Crucially, the bone of contention is that her appearance and the way that she is concealed beneath a kaleidoscope of guises or, I might say, disguises, obliterate her true self and make her merely the sum of her appearance.

In 1870, Théodore Duret, who was a friend of the impressionists, wrote that the fashionable genre paintings of Alfred Stevens "reflect the image of the modern *Parisienne*, of that woman from whose bearing and toilette and costume one does not know what to think, hesitating to say with confidence whether or not she is an honest woman." Once again, appearances are

FIGURE 20 Claude Monet, *Camille*, 1866 Kunsthalle Bremen

Pierre-Auguste Renoir, The Engaged Couple, c. 1868 Wallraf-Richartz-Museum, Cologne





absolutely overwhelming but at the same time disturbingly ambiguous. This was a matter of great concern for the moralists. For the men about town, though, it meant endless fascination, endless speculation as to whether the women they saw were in fact respectable. There is a play in these pictures. For each of the figures, there is a clear sign that allows the boulevardier, the man about town, to ask interesting questions about who they are. Yet each of them, in different ways, eludes a clear definition: Monet's woman sweeps past you toward somebody else; Renoir's is clearly waiting for somebody in the woods.

Returning momentarily to small-scale pictures of Lise and to the riverbank, we see all these associations brought together in paintings of the late 1860s, when both Monet and Renoir were frequenting the bathing place of La Grenouillère on the Seine. In 1870, Astruc, whom you've already heard describing Lise, wrote: "La Grenouillère has attracted a great deal of attention—oh, delightful home of diving, of greenery, of canotiers and free young women, of journalists lying in wait for the latest cancan, you deserve to inspire some of our most likeable colorists. Monet has long wanted to tackle the subject." In fact, both Renoir and Monet had already done so, but only on a small scale. Another wonderful description comes from the mother of Berthe Morisot, the painter: "It is said to be a very rustic little place used for rendez-vous by a very frivolous society, and that if a man goes there alone, he returns in the company of at least one other person." For Madame Morisot, a profoundly respectable person, this is a barely coded way of describing demimondaine activities.

In these closely mixed groupings, the relationships between male and female figures are very much at issue. In Monet's pictures of the subject, we get some sharper psychological characterizations, an interplay between the figures that is almost a caricature. But Renoir at this point definitely saw himself primarily as a figure painter and not as a landscapist. He started to create a range of different subjects—of single figures and occasionally paired figures—exploring different forms of relationships between the sexes. For instance, it was long assumed that the painting called The Engaged Couple (fig. 21) was a picture of Alfred Sisley and his fiancée. But both the documents and the appearance of the figure on the right led Anne Distel to argue convincingly that Renoir is using Sisley together with Lise as models for a genre painting.9 The relationship they are enacting, together with the ring worn ostentatiously on Lise's wedding-ring finger, is presenting the rhetoric, not the fact, of an engagement between the two people.

In general, though, Renoir is playing in a rather more light-hearted way with the undertones of certain sorts of moral relationships, from that of a respectable engaged couple to something far more ambivalent in La Promenade (1870, Los Angeles, J. Paul Getty Museum), for which Lise also modeled.10 He is using Lise as the ideal model in order to create a whole series of different forms of the Parisienne, different ways in which the Parisienne could parade herself before the eyes of the viewer. She and Renoir together are complicit in creating this endless game of role playing, staged by the artist but in which she works as an accomplice, not as a passive recipient. Their masquerade of modern life became even more varied in the later years of their relationship. At the Salon of 1869, Lise, wearing an extremely casual and definitely somewhat risqué outfit, with a loose summer skirt and a shift slipping off her shoulder and almost showing her breasts, appeared in a picture called simply

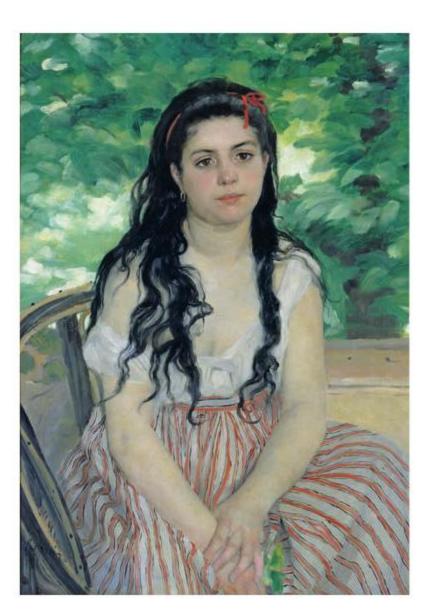




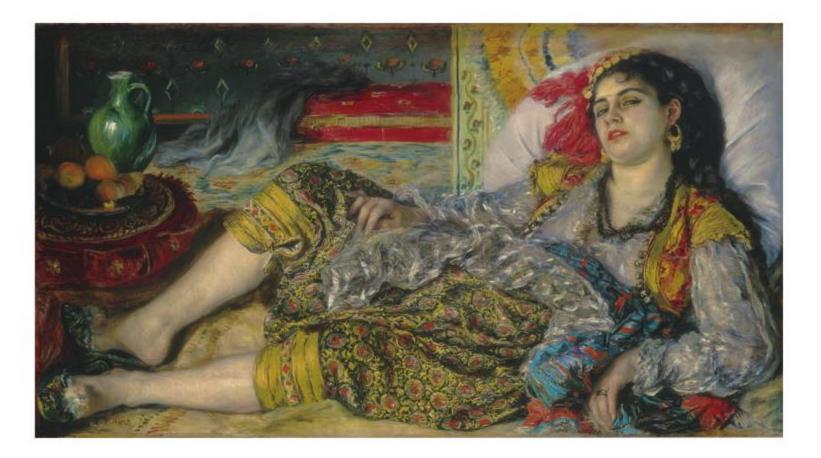
FIGURE 22 Pierre-Auguste Renoir, In Summer: Study (Gypsy), Nationalgalerie, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Berlin

FIGURE 23 Pierre-Auguste Renoir, Bather with a Griffon, 1870 Museu de Arte de São Paolo Assis Chateaubriand

In Summer: Study (fig. 22). There is a sort of exoticism that led the picture later to be called Gypsy, though this was not its original title, and inviting comparison with very different sorts of exotic gypsy types, though Renoir is clearly giving us a modern Parisian type.

At the Salon the following year, Lise appeared in her most ambitious guises yet, once as a modern Venus in Bather with a Griffon (fig. 23) and once as a modern odalisque in Woman of Algiers (fig. 24). Again, Renoir is bringing together different artistic traditions to create explicitly modern types. In the first case, Lise enacts a dramatic combination of a Cnidian Venus (indeed, when it was shown in 1870, one critic described it as a caricature of an antique Venus), Courbet's scandalous Young Ladies on the Banks of the Seine, shown at the Salon of 1857 (see fig. 2), and Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres's Birth of Venus (1808–48, Chantilly, Musée Condé). In Woman of Algiers, Lise appears yet again as a modern Parisian woman, but now dressed up in exotic Algerian costume. Ingres's odalisques are a key ingredient in this painting, and here he is brought together with Eugène Delacroix, another archetypal figure of the Parisian art world in the mid-nineteenth century, and his Women of Algiers in Their Apartment (1834, Paris, Musée du Louvre).

The picture I am most puzzled and interested by at the moment is the large Nymph by a Stream (fig. 25). Quite clearly this is Lise, wearing a laurel wreath and acting as the allegory of a source of water, which comes out between her fingers, creating another peculiar mixture of allegory with a palpably realistic treatment of the female body. Once again we can play art historical sources with it and put it next to Courbet's recent picture of the same subject, La Source (1868, Paris, Musée d'Orsay) or the famous version of the subject by Ingres, first exhibited in Paris in 1861 (1808-48, Paris, Musée d'Orsay). But I wonder, speculatively, whether there may not be another dimension to this



subject. On July 21, 1870, two days after the outbreak of the Franco-Prussian War, Lise gave birth to a daughter named Jeanne. Looking at this picture, and at the curve of her belly, I wonder whether it is not also a private celebration of Lise's maternity. In this painting, Lise is very directly looking at the artist and the spectator, a rarity among all Renoir's pictures of her. There is a type of engagement in this single figure that is quite unlike the earlier paintings, in which the gaze is always somewhat elusive.

Pierre-Auguste Renoir, Woman of Algiers (Odalisque), 1870 National Gallery of Art, Washington

In his last images of Lise, Renoir continues to cast her in roles. In 1872, just after the Franco-Prussian War ended, in the first Salon exhibition after the war and the Paris Commune, he exhibits the most peculiar of his masquerade pictures, Parisiennes in Algerian Costume (1872, National Museum of Western Art, Tokyo). Once again we are looking at a reworking of Delacroix's Women of Algiers, but one in which all the figures are explicitly Parisian, perhaps all modeled by Lise. The emphasis on masquerade is stronger here than anywhere else. There is no claim whatsoever in this picture to ethnography or an actual

Pierre-Auguste Renoir, A Nymph by a Stream, c. 1869–70 National Gallery, London



record of Algerian spaces of social life, which the Delacroix painting purported to some extent to be. Lise enacts the role of the exotic woman by dressing or undressing, taking her clothes off in a rather small Parisian studio and getting out a few bits of fancy gear to drape across herself as she sits on top of a rather nice carpet.

Renoir's relationship with Lise drew to a close in the early 1870s. The story put forward by her family was that their relationship ended in 1872, when she married Georges Brière de l'Isle, an architect, and went off to have a happy life and lots of children. Recently revealed biographical information tells us that, in fact, her first child with Georges was born on December 14, 1873, and they married only in 1883. According to the tale told by her relatives, Lise in a White Shawl, which is not dated, was given to Lise as a wedding present. It seems possible that Renoir and Lise split up only in 1873, and that she did not marry Brière de l'Isle until ten years later. So, what happened? The only evidence we have of a rupture is an incident in the summer of 1873, when Renoir went to stay with Charles Le Coeur, Jules's brother, and apparently made improper advances to his young daughter, who at that date would have been aged around fourteen. It is possible that this might have precipitated the break with Lise, but we do not know. We do know that at around this time she disappears completely from his life. What happened to their daughter, Jeanne? Lise abandoned her. Left with a wet nurse in southern Normandy, Jeanne was brought up as the nurse's own child, and apparently Lise never saw her again. Renoir continued to subsidize his daughter financially for the rest of his life, until his death in 1919, without the knowledge of his own wife. Renoir met Jeanne several times before she herself married, and she even called herself Jeanne Renoir, though her father never formally acknowledged her."

Renoir's next relationship that entered his paintings was with the young actress Henriette Henriot. She was around sixteen when their liaison began, before the end of 1873. She appears on the walls of the first impressionist group exhibition in the spring of 1874 in the painting with the simple title *Parisienne* (1874, Cardiff, National Museum of Wales). The title makes explicit what we have seen implicitly in the paintings of Lise, and the big pictures of Henriette are, in a sense, recapitulations of the guises seen with Lise.

Eventually, starting in 1881, we see the appearance of the woman whom Renoir eventually married, Aline Charigot. I want to emphasize just how different their identities are. Aline becomes a monumental timeless female body. She was twenty-one when they met, somewhat older than Lise or Henriette had been, and she becomes the archetype of maternity, a nice country girl with no trace of the *Parisienne*. Renoir married her in 1890, five years after the birth of their first child.

I'm quite sure, though, that he did not forget about Lise, and not only because he was still supporting their child. In 1882, he painted the young daughter of his dealer, Paul Durand-Ruel, and in this portrait, Marie-Thérèse Durand-Ruel Sewing (1882, Williamstown, Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute), he gives Marie-Thérèse almost exactly the same pose as Lise in Lise Sewing (fig. 12), a painting that had remained in Lise's possession since their break in the early 1870s.

- John House's unexpected death in February 2012 was a tragic loss to the scholarly community and his many friends within it. The present essay was revised for publication from the transcript of House's lecture, delivered at the Dallas Museum of Art on February 18, 2011. The editor wishes to thank Richard R. Brettell and Anne Distel for kindly reviewing the transcript of the lecture and offering guidance in the editorial process.
- LeCoeur 2009 and Gélineau 2007. [During his lecture, John House expressed his appreciation to both, and thanked Marc Le Coeur for a "very interesting lively correspondence by electronic means."—Ed.]
- 2. Cooper 1959.
- 3. "Si par hasard ils rament avec ardeur, c'est pour gagner plus vite un coin de terre où le vin est frais, où la friture pétille, où les arbres sont verts, où les baigneuses trouvent un fond de sable et de l'ombrage. Au risque d'entraver la manœuvre, ils emmènent avec eux des canotières, lestes, pimpantes, rieuses, infatigables, qui ne s'inquiètent jamais de lendemain, pourvu qu'on les promène, qu'on les héberges et qu'on ait l'air de les trouver jolies" (Labédollière 1861, 136-37).

- 4. Lise was shown in the Paris Salon that opened in May 1868, and on December 14 of that year, Lise gave birth to a son called Pierre. We do not know who his father was, but we might assume it was Renoir. There is no further documentary trace of Pierre, which leads one to assume that he died in infancy. The private relationship between Renoir and Lise clearly had a complexity that does not appear in any sense in the way in which she is depicted in Renoir's art.
- 5. "C'est l'aimable fille de Paris, au bois, . . . chérissant les ombrages non pour la fraîcheur qu'ils donnent et la solitude réalisée,—mais pour les bons divertissements qui s'y trouvent: le bal, la quingette, le restaurant à la mode....L'héroine n'a rien de champêtre que les traits. C'est une bonne fille colorée, potelée, vigoureuse, bien en chair, non dépourvue d'esprit, je le suppose. Les yeux expriment bien la malice d'origine et l'incisive observation populaire" (Zacharie Astruc, "Salon de 1868 aux Champs-Élysée: Le grand style—II," L'Étendard, June 27, 1868, unpaged).
- 6. "Elles reflètent l'image de la Parisienne moderne, de cette femme dont, à l'allure et à la toilette, on ne sait trop que penser, hésitant à dire a priori si c'est ou non une femme honnête" (Duret 1885, 20).

- 7. "On s'est beaucoup occupé de la Grenouillère—O jolis pays de plongeons, de verdure, de canotiers, de cocodettes, de journalistes reporteurs à l'affût d'un cancan nouveau, tu mérites d'inspirer quelques-uns de nos aimables coloristes. Monet a longtemps voulu s'emparer du thème" (Zacharie Astruc, "Le Salon, Septième Journée," L'Écho des Beaux-Arts, no. 8 [June 19, 1870]: 2).
- 8. "On dit que c'est un petit rendez-vous très agreste d'un monde très léger et que, si l'on y va seul, on revient au moins deux" (Madame Morisot to Berthe Morisot, 1867; see Morisot 1950, p. 20).
- 9. Renoir 1985, 188-89.
- House, 1997.
- 11. In his biography of her, Jean-Claude Gélineau refers to her as Jeanne Tréhot (Gélineau 2007).



## A Liebermann for Dallas

Max Liebermann's Swimmers

RICHARD R. BRETTELL

Max Liebermann's name is scarcely known in the United States. The only important recent exhibition devoted exclusively to his work was held, not at a major art museum such as the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, the Art Institute of Chicago, or the Dallas Museum of Art, but at the Skirball Cultural Center in Los Angeles and the Jewish Museum in New York-two institutions tied less to art history than to Jewish history.1 From this, we learn what we already suspected, that Max Liebermann was Jewish. If this has become his "niche" in the United States, it is a doubly difficult one, because Liebermann was not only Jewish, but also German—springing from the major European national artistic tradition that is least well represented in American museums and private collections. For us, important European art is Italian, French, Dutch, Flemish, Spanish, or—somewhat distantly—English; decidedly not German. In fact, our cultural prejudice against German art is of long standing, although it was given real impetus by the two great wars of the twentieth century. (No one has ever persuasively claimed that art and politics are unrelated.) This prejudice becomes evident when we consider that in the nineteenth century many American artists had real ties to Germany, and many of the finest were either German themselves—Albert Bierstadt and Emanuel Leutze, for example-or German trained-William Merritt Chase and Frank Duveneck, among many others. Yet, even with the prominent role of the German-born Alfred Stieglitz in twentieth-century American modernism and the long German phases of such canonical figures as Marsden Hartley and Lyonel Feininger, our idea of modern art remains decidedly French based.

I will never forget seeing Max Liebermann's Swimmers (fig. 27),² for the first time, in the fall of 1987, on a wall of the small back room of Herman Shickman's gallery on Madison Avenue in New York. As an expert in French nineteenth-century painting, I had at the time a serviceable, if sketchy knowledge of German art of the same period, but I knew quite a bit about Max Liebermann for two reasons: first, because he was a cosmopolitan German painter, and second, because he was also a pathbreaking collector of French art, with important works by Édouard Manet, Claude Monet, Pierre-Auguste Renoir, Paul Cézanne, and others in his personal collection.³ I had seen—and even published—Liebermann's paintings of German and Dutch peasant life in German museums and knew his so-called impressionist paintings and his haunting self-portraits quite well.⁴ I also knew that American museums

OPPOSITE
FIGURE 26
Max Liebermann,
Swimmers, 1875–77
Detail of figure 27



FIGURE 27 Max Liebermann, Swimmers, 1875-77 Dallas Museum of Art

were even more Francophile than I was myself and that our collections—with the exception of the cheery, beer-stein realism of the nineteenth-century German holdings at the Milwaukee Art Museum and the more daring German Expressionist collections at Saint Louis and Los Angeles (there was no Neue Gallerie yet)—were weak in German painting, particularly in the major artists of the nineteenth century, from Caspar David Friedrich through Adolph Menzel to Lovis Corinth. I also knew that this large and ambitious painting was among the earliest true masterpieces of the artist, who was probably the most important German painter of the last three decades of the nineteenth century.

When I first saw the painting, I was the Searle Curator of European Painting at the Art Institute of Chicago and, in that capacity, hastened home to show the transparency to my boss, the late James N. Wood, who liked it very much, but feared that it would not get by the European Paintings Committee, even at its very reasonable price. Within a few short months, I had arrived in Dallas as the new director of the Dallas Museum of Art and immediately asked Mr. Shickman to send the painting down. It looked wonderful—if a bit out of place-in the Museum's galleries, which too, like those in Chicago, were decidedly Francophile. Because I was still in that very brief honeymoon phase with the Dallas trustees, they humored me and approved the purchase—my first in Dallas. Little did they know that the Liebermann was going to be the wedge that created an opening for other far-ranging (and not French) acquisitions by future curators—including works by Ferdinand Hodler, Edward Burne-Jones, Léon Frédéric, and others—which added a pan-European zest to the French fare of the Museum's European collections.

Born in Berlin in 1847, Liebermann was the son of a successful businessman whose wealth was such that the future painter never had to work for a living. Yet, like his exact contemporary, the equally wealthy impressionist painter Gustave Caillebotte, Liebermann did not let his comfortable income prevent him from working hard throughout his life, and in fact he made a good deal of money in his own right as a successful artist. Like many young men of his class, he trained initially in the law and philosophy, while taking painting lessons in Berlin and before commencing the serious study of art in Weimar in 1868. As an art student, he was deeply affected by another important artist, equally little known today in America, the great Hungarian realist painter Mihály Munkácsy, whose early work served as a major impetus for Liebermann's own.5

During the Franco-Prussian War (1870–71), Liebermann served in the Prussian army as a medic and, with his very good training in languages and fluent French, was among the few Germans who went to France after its defeat, spending time in both Paris and the famous village of Barbizon, where, because of his German origins, he was famously refused a meeting with Jean-François Millet, the patriotic dean of the French painters in the village. Liebermann's success as an artist was assured by the brilliant—if controversial—exhibition of his first major painting, Women Plucking Geese, in Berlin in 1872 (fig. 28). His choice of a rural subject quickly allied his art with the French mid-century avant-garde tradition of the so-called Barbizon School and demonstrated his knowledge of international painting trends, particularly that of Munkácsy. At the time of its exhibition, critics noted the vulgarity of the subject and the relative crudeness of the painting's execution, thereby identifying Lieberman as a German member of the French-based (thus "foreign") European avant-garde. Yet, on arriving in Paris after the Franco-Prussian War, Liebermann immediately realized the emerging importance of the new



FIGURE 28 Max Liebermann, Women Plucking Geese, 1872 Alte Nationalgalerie, Berlin

urban naturalism practiced by Manet and his young followers, the future impressionists, and he vowed to learn from these younger avant-gardistes.

During the mid-1870s, when Liebermann was based in Paris, and continuing through much of the 1880s, he spent his summer months in the Netherlands, sometimes in Amsterdam, where he became fascinated with the traditional Jewish area of the city, which had been important art historically since Rembrandt painted there in the seventeenth century. He also spent a good deal of time in the small villages around Laren, east of the capital, where he carefully observed the working methods, costumes, and customs of the local rural workers. In addition, he made several trips to Haarlem to see the work of his pictorial hero, Frans Hals.

Liebermann began work on Swimmers, an ambitious canvas, in Sandvoort in the summer of 1875, but left it "incomplete" and allowed about two years to go by as he worked on different projects before taking it up again. For this study of modern life, Liebermann tackled a subject that is decidedly urban—schoolboys or, more likely, street urchins before, during, and after their swim in the sea on a warm summer day. The ten boys seem to have used a fisherman's floating pier hut, complete with its nets and tackle (all carefully painted, along with the graffiti on the wall), as a combination diving board and changing room. They are in various states of undress—three of them completely nude, five half-clothed, and two all but completely dressed—and their poses are equally varied, ranging from seated to standing to kneeling, thus presenting a host of pictorial challenges to a painter not yet quite thirty years old. In his definitive catalogue raisonné, Matthias Eberle dates the painting's completion to the spring or summer of 1877, in time for its first showing at the annual exhibition, in Amsterdam, of works by foreign artists, which was held from September 17 through October 15 of 1877. ¹º In many ways, it was his debut as a painter of modern life, and because his paintings had failed at the Paris Salons during those years, either because they had been rejected or ignored (perhaps due to his German origins), he elected to exhibit it in the Netherlands, where a tradition of urban realism was already more than 250 years old in 1877. Unfortunately, no contemporary review mentioning it at the 1877 exhibition has been discovered, and the reception of the painting must have disappointed its exacting maker, whose earlier exhibition paintings had been so prominently reviewed in Germany, because it was apparently not exhibited again until 1925 in Berlin. Did he submit it to the 1878 Universal Exposition exhibition held in Paris? If he did, it was refused and thus leaves no paper trail. Whatever happened to it, Swimmers was part of a pattern of disappointment that ran through Liebermann's career in France and eventually resulted in his return to Germany in 1878—not to his native Berlin, but to the cultural capital of Bavaria, Munich, where he remained until 1882.

We can only speculate about the reason for Liebermann's choice of this particular subject. He seems not to have been in Paris for the Salon of 1869, when Frédéric Bazille exhibited his full-scale male bather composition, the first important modern work with this subject (fig. 29), and nothing ties him with Bazille enough for him to have seen that painting or its more successful—and more distinctly homoerotic—single-figure version of 1868 (Zurich, Fondation Rau pour le Tiers-Monde) before he started his own work in 1872. Clearly, and in much the same way as Edgar Degas, in Young Spartans (1860–80, London, National Gallery), was struggling with the problem at the same time,

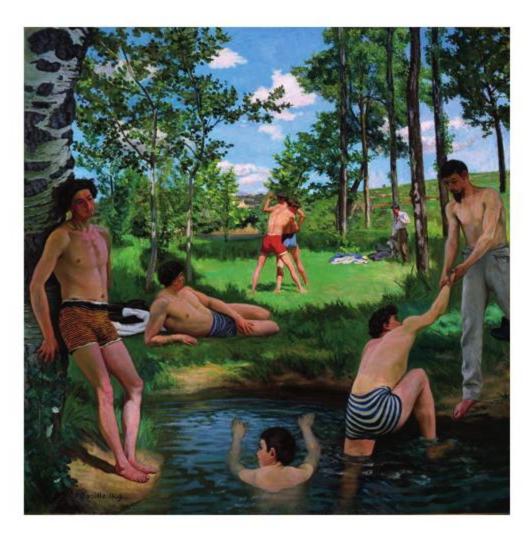


FIGURE 29 Frédéric Bazille, Bathers (Summer Scene), 1869 Fogg Museum, Harvard Art Museums, Cambridge, Massachusetts

Liebermann wanted to paint the nude without resorting to studio models and a contrived classical composition. When, on a summer trip to Holland, Liebermann witnessed boys swimming, he realized the potential of the scene as a subject for a multifigure modern composition with natural, that is, uncontrived, nudity. This was an image that was literally about vitality and youth—about the future—rather than a description of rural workers engaged in millennial tasks. Rather than painting a female nude, as had Manet, Gustave Courbet, and other of Liebermann's French heroes, he was able to allow contemporary viewers access to a scene of contemporary nudity without prurience or the dubious moral consequences of modern female nudes, which were associated with prostitution or illicit, nonfamilial sexuality. In this, Liebermann was participating in the budding naturalist movement in art and literature, in which the realist aesthetic of the mid-nineteenth century exemplified by Courbet, Millet, and the Barbizon painters was transformed into an urban art that dealt with the class issues and with urban poverty. This was given particular impetus in France by the literature—and art criticism—of Émile Zola and by the large-scale Salon paintings of Manet and his followers.

We suspect that Liebermann made some of his wonderful pencil drawings of the setting and the principal figures "on the spot," which he visited often enough to observe closely." The detailed representations of certain of the boys also suggest that, when working in his Paris studio on the large canvas itself, he hired street urchins or lower-class boys as models. The sheer complexity of observation makes this painting very different from plein air bathing pictures with casually observed nudity such as those painted by Renoir and Monet at La Grenouillère in the summer of 1869. In creating this large, exhibition picture, the young German painter was working on what was to become his first naturalist masterpiece.

In all likelihood, Liebermann's precedents and touchstones were French. Swimmers was, after all, painted entirely in his studio in Paris in what we now think to have been two annual campaigns, in 1875 and 1876-77. When Liebermann first came to Paris in 1872 or 1873, and before the series of independent exhibitions by the future impressionists began in the spring of 1874, the number of naturalist paintings at the Salon was quite low, and naturalism was a decidedly rural affair. It is, thus, hardly surprising that Liebermann's foray into the modern and urban realms of naturalism occurred at the very moment when exhibition pictures like this were first beginning to be made in some quantity by French artists.

The fact that Liebermann's 1872 exhibition picture of men and women plucking geese was a rural scene is further proof that it was not until the following years that he became more aware of the shift from rural to urban subjects for naturalist painters. In all likelihood, Liebermann struggled with the composition largely because of its cosmopolitan nature. Since he could not revisit the Dutch site of the work while laboring on the large canvas in Paris, he was unable to refresh his visual stimulation with a re-immersion in life. All he could do was look at other pictures or hired models and study and restudy the drawings he had made for it en plein air. As a young painter working on his first modern subject picture, this might not have been sufficient.

It is fascinating to consider whether Liebermann visited the second impressionist exhibition of 1876, at which the young Caillebotte under Degas's leadership made his avant-garde exhibition debut as an urban realist with highly composed, large-scale figure pictures. Two of these, representing half-clothed urban workers planing the newly laid parquet floors of Parisian apartments under construction (1876, Paris, Musée d'Orsay, and private collection), may have reactivated Liebermann, who seems to have gone back to work on Swimmers in that year, completing it in early to mid-1877, after the third impressionist exhibition, at which Caillebotte made an even bigger splash with his large-scale pictures of urban street life in Paris. In addition, the debut of urban naturalists such as Jules Bastien-Lepage and Jean-François Raffaëlli at the Salon gave the young German the impetus to complete his first exhibition picture in the new mode. Although his painting would look well if juxtaposed with Caillebotte's 1876 paintings of urban workers, its comparative darkness and classical, frieze-like composition would already have appeared old fashioned by 1877, when he decided to send it to Amsterdam for its debut in the annual exhibition of foreign artists. Had it been successful there, it is likely that Liebermann would have submitted it to the Universal Exposition of 1878, held in the spring and summer of that year. As we have seen, If he did submit it, it was rejected, which may explain his dejected return to Germany.

No one bought Swimmers from the Amsterdam exhibition and, perhaps because of this, it has had a longer history of neglect than any of the other large-scale exhibition pictures—self-conscious masterpieces—painted by Liebermann in the 1870s and early 1880s. The acceptance of his rural naturalism was by far greater, and it seems that, with the possible exception of a brief period of time in a private collection, the painting remained in the artist's collection throughout his life. Indeed, the painting of the seascape and parts of the body of the seated boy at right seems to have been done as late as the 1920s, when Liebermann took up the composition for a third and last time before its second exhibition in Berlin in 1925. The painting remained in his studio at the time of his death, and its association with his "failure" plagued it in the Liebermann literature until its acquisition by the Dallas Museum of Art in 1988.

Despite the artist's own ambivalence about his creation, the painting is a brilliant record of Liebermann's rigorous cosmopolitan ambitions as a painter in the 1870s. In making it, he wrestled not only with the art and imagery of the mid-century realists Millet and Courbet, but also took on the bracing urban modernity of Manet, Renoir, Degas, and Caillebotte. Indeed, had he been more courageous about his exhibition strategies, he might well have put his oar in with the impressionists rather than attempt a futile siege of the Salon and other bastions of historicist academic art. (There was another Jewish artist of German origin in the first impressionist exhibition in 1874, so it was not out of the question.) His own career might well have blossomed even earlier had he not shied away from the exhibition strategies of precisely the kind of urban modernist against whom he competed in making the painting.

It is fascinating to note that every other major painting of male bathers produced in Europe and America between 1860 and 1890 likewise failed in some important sense. As we have seen, Bazille's first attempt produced little effect at the Salon of 1869 and languished in his family's collection after his death in the Franco-Prussian War. Had Liebermann gone to the impressionist exhibition of 1877 in Paris, while in the last throes of painting his work, he would have seen Cézanne's first important work in the genre, Bathers at Rest (1876–77, Philadelphia, Barnes Foundation). This work—perhaps the artist's most important painting to date—made its debut in that exhibition, but was scarcely noticed in the extensive critical press. It was not until the 1980s that it was conclusively proved that the work itself (rather than a painted study for it) was, in fact, in the 1877 exhibition at all. It must be said that Liebermann was not yet ready for Cézanne's chromatic experiments in 1877 and that, like others, he would have found the nudes themselves lumpy and ill-drawn, particularly in contrast to his own efforts.

Yet, the one major work representing male bathers swimming that, for me, actually played the largest role in bringing the Liebermann to Texas was not even a European painting, but a directly analogous American masterpiece, Thomas Eakins's Swimming (fig. 30), in the Amon Carter Museum of American

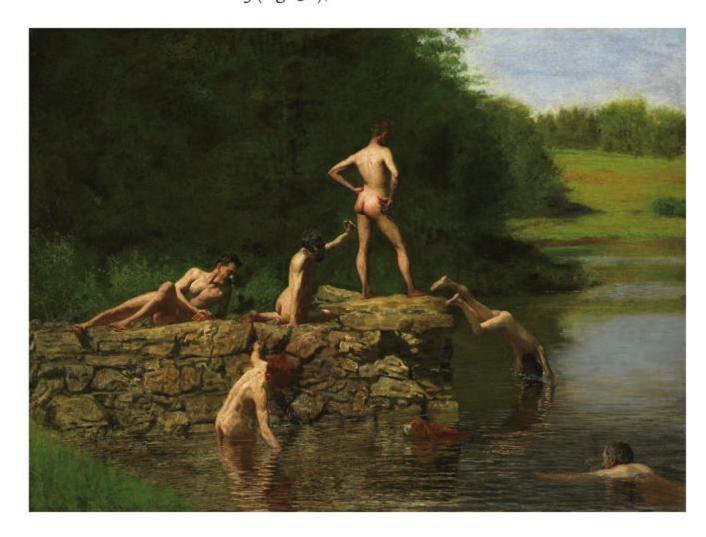


FIGURE 30 Thomas Eakins, Swimming, 1885 The Amon Carter Museum of American Art, Fort Worth



Gustave Caillebotte, Man at His Bath, 1884 Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

Art in Fort Worth. Like Liebermann, Eakins rooted his own study of the male nude in his training in France, where he had worked in Jean-Léon Gérôme's studio in the late 1860s. But it was not until a commission of 1884 that he had the freedom to paint what is one of his principal masterpieces. Created after a long period of study, which included drawings, oil sketches, and photographs, Eakins's painting was rejected by its patron and subsequently led to the artist's dismissal as a professor of art at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts. It too languished in the painter's collection, having appeared in two inconsequential exhibitions during his lifetime, and was sold to the city of Fort Worth by his widow in 1925. Indeed, each of the major works in this genre that I have discussed failed, and each remained unsold during the artist's life. <sup>14</sup>

Surely, the failure of all these paintings has to do not only with their subject but also their awkward aesthetic elevation of contemporary male nudity. As an artistic subject, male nudity has deep roots in Western art, but since the revival of the genre during the Renaissance, artists have, at best, remained ambivalent about the contemporary male nude. Underscoring the quandaries faced by the painter of the male nude, all the artists I've discussed went out of their way to avoid the representation of what must have been the offending genitalia: Bazille added bathing trunks to his already completed nudes (three of which are frontal), Cézanne represented the frontal bather in an awkward way holding a towel around his "private parts," and Liebermann and Eakins went to some trouble to select poses in which the genitals would be invisible, in spite of the nudity of the figure. When Caillebotte finally painted a full-scale male nude, he represented him from the back, but even the slight indication of the model's scrotum was enough to have the picture banished to a closet, when it made its first and only appearance in the artist's lifetime, during the avant-garde exhibition in Brussels (fig. 31). Clearly, male nudity was not supposed to break certain unwritten moral codes in this prudish period—the same unspoken standards are in force even today in the most public of all art forms, contemporary cinema.

While male nudity was completely acceptable in modern society at the time, it was not acceptable in art, and artists who entered this territory risked being considered peintres maudits, painters who misbehave or are, in the extreme case, deviant. Liebermann's painting is more fittingly understood in this context, rather than in the conventionally German art historical context against which it is often read. In fact, Swimmers was his most important early attempt at internationalism or, perhaps better, cosmopolitanism, and its Dutch subject, French execution, and Dutch and German exhibition history make it clear that Liebermann did not want to be constrained by his national origins, particularly after the Franco-Prussian War and its bitter aftermath for the French. It must be stressed that there is nothing whatsoever about the painting's subject that points to a particular city or country. Boys bathed in ponds, rivers, and seas all over Europe, and the clothing worn by these urchins is more evocative of their class status (low) than of their particular national or urban origins.

The painting's most legible origins, indeed, are art historical, rather than national. Most clearly, the source for the figure on the right is the famous Spinario, a Greek sculpture of a seated boy pulling a thorn from the sole of his foot (fig. 32). The sources for many of the other figures lie in the art of Michelangelo, whose sculptures can be linked to at least two of the figures: the standing boy at center putting on his striped shirt echoes the bound slaves by Michelangelo in the Louvre (fig. 33) and the nude boy seated on the floor at left can be linked to his sculpture of a crouching boy in the Hermitage Museum (fig. 34). Others have linked the major nude figure at center right to figures in Michelangelo's lost fresco, The Battle of Cascina, which was known from

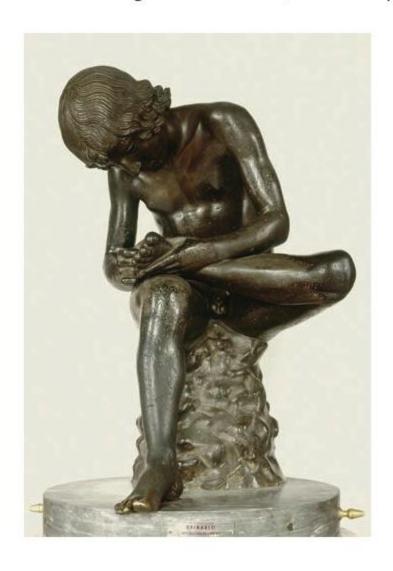
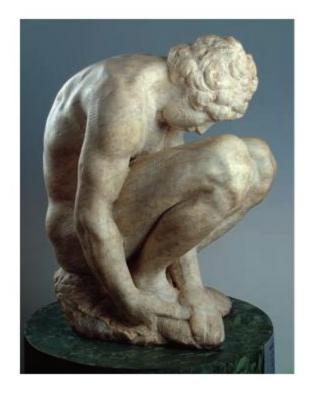
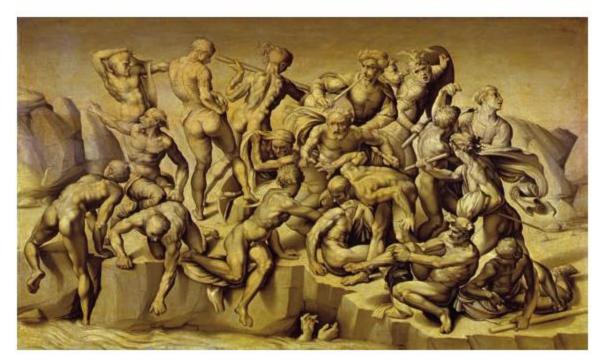




FIGURE 32 Spinario, or Boy Pulling a Thorn from His Foot, 1st century BCE Palazzo dei Conservatori, Rome

FIGURE 33 Michelangelo Buonarotti, The Dying Slave, c. 1513-14 Musée du Louvre, Paris





Michelangelo Buonarotti, Crouching Boy, c. 1530–34 State Hermitage Museum, Saint Petersburg

Aristotele di Sangallo, after Michelangelo Buonarotti, The Battle of Cascina, c. 1542 Holkham Hall, Norfolk, England

copies and Michelangelo's own drawings (fig. 35). In none of these cases is the resemblance between the source and the figure more than generic, suggesting that Liebermann, if he did want to find inspiration in the art of the past, preferred not to quote well-known figures precisely. Rather, his own well-educated eye found rhymes in contemporary figures with images from art that populated his own prodigious visual memory.

As if in a kind of sympathetic relationship to the range of pictorial sources for the figures in this picture, Liebermann employed many different types of painting within it. Rather than use one or another mode of painting, as had Bazille, Caillebotte, and Eakins, Liebermann studied the figures using different techniques. The foreground boys—and their clothing—are painted with densely modeled and thickly painted marks, which cannot be clearly differentiated as gestures (fig. 26). By contrast, the background three figures on the left and the single clothed figure on the right are evoked with thinned paint, applied with long, almost drawn gestures, in a manner that almost suggests that Liebermann had been to Spain to study Diego Velázquez (which he had not). The tour de force painting of the central boy putting on his blue and white striped shirt has all the gestural brilliance of a Frans Hals. In this way, the painting wears its art historical ambitions on its surface and, as we look at the subsequent masterpieces of naturalist painting by such artists as Bastien-Lepage and Henri Gervex, we can see that Liebermann was treading that path well before they joined him.

Liebermann's Swimmers remains one of the principal masterpieces of European, cosmopolitan figure painting of the 1870s. One wishes that the artist had recorded something of what might have been a visit by Manet, whose studio was very near Liebermann's in Paris. And one also wishes that the painting had been shown at the immense art exhibition of the Universal Exposition in Paris in 1878, where surely some critic would have written about it. Instead, when we attempt an interpretation, we are left largely to our own devices and to the painting itself. Perhaps someday, it could be united with the other "failed" canvases devoted to contemporary male nudity painted between 1865 and 1886. One is in nearby Fort Worth, but the fact that one, Cézanne's Bathers at Rest, is in the Barnes Foundation, from which it may not be lent, means that such an exhibition will never happen.

- Gilbert 2005.
- 2. The German title, Im Schwimmbad, has been variously translated, and the painting has been published by the Dallas Museum of Art as At the Swimming Hole; that title has been amended to reflect more closely the subject depicted.
- For the catalogue raisonné of Liebermann's work, see Eberle 1995-96. For additional information about his life and career, see Achenbach and Eberle 1979, Boskamp 1994, Deshmukh, Forster-Hahn, and Gaehtgens 2011, Gilbert 2005, Hansen 1995, Natter and Schoeps 1997, and Weber 2003. For details about Liebermann's collection of contemporary French art, see Janda 2011, 91-105.
- Brettell and Brettell 1983, 41-43, 88-89.
- 5. For Liebermann's relationship to Munkácsy, see Ziegler 2011, 21-33; and Eberle 1979, 11-40.
- See Eberle 1995–96, vol. 1, p. 14. For a further discussion of Liebermann's relationship to Millet, see Meyer 2011, 63-77, especially pp. 69-89 on the two artists' possible meeting in 1874.
- For Liebermann's reception in France, see Arnoux 2011, 79 and 87-88nn. 1-4; see also Esner 1994, Gaehtgens 1999, and Tolède 2000.

- For more information on Liebermann's relationship to the Netherlands and Dutch art, see Andratschke and Heij 2006.
- 9. The Frans Hals Museum had opened only in 1872 and was, hence, a novelty when Liebermann arrived in the Netherlands.
- 10. Eberle 1995-96, vol. 1, p. 104.
- 11. One such drawing of five figures was cited in ibid., p. 104. In correspondence with the author, Eberle identified two additional preparatory sketches not located before the publication of his catalogue raisonné. One is a general compositional study (Ketterer, Hamburg, March 18, 2005, lot 1154). The other is a drawing after one of Michelangelo's slaves that Liebermann must have made during one of his early visits to Paris. This drawing is folio 4 in Liebermann's first sketchbook, on permanent loan to the Kupferstichkabinett of the Staatlichen Museen, Berlin. See Dallas Museum of Art curatorial file for Swimmers.
- 12. Eberle suggests that Liebermann's frustration with the composition was so strong that he cut it into parts (in a manner familiar to students of Manet's failed Salon paintings of the 1860s) and that it was reassembled and repainted in the early 1920s. Examination of the painting today contradicts such a hypothesis; see Eberle 1995-96, vol. 1, p. 102.

- 13. Édouard Brandon, a friend of Camille Pissarro's, even sent a realist painting of a synagogue interior to the impressionist exhibition in 1874.
- 14. Brettell 1996, 80-97.
- 15. Indeed, one of the greatest sheets for this mysterious fresco was in the Teylers Museum, founded in the late eighteenth century in Haarlem, which Liebermann visited on many occasions in the 1870s.
- See Deshmukh, Forster-Hahn, and Gaehtgens 2011, 93. Although this source actually seems to contradict the idea of their meeting (citing an occasion in 1881 when Manet refused to meet Liebermann, whose paintings he held in high esteem, because he could not receive a German "with the appropriate honors"), Manet would frequently make private exceptions to formal or public etiquette. He did so often in his friendships with men and women whom he would not officially meet because of their inferior social position or their nationality.



## Portraits, Identities, Pleasures

Édouard Manet's Isabelle Lemonnier with a Muff

NANCY LOCKE

Édouard Manet was always, first and foremost, a figure painter. His figures, whether situated in an environment, as is *The Street Singer* (1862, Boston, Museum of Fine Arts), or against a blank background, as is *The Philosopher* (1865–67, Art Institute of Chicago), seem conjured out of nowhere and made present to us. One might expect that an artist with such a tremendous capacity for rendering the figure would be known for his portraits, but Manet's early experiences with portraits were not promising. In the early 1860s, a certain Madame Brunet, the wife of the sculptor Eugène Brunet, posed for a portrait (fig. 37) that now strikes us as typical of Manet's work from the period.¹ But Manet's friend Théodore Duret reports of the sitter: "When she saw herself on the canvas, and the way she looked there, she began to cry—it is Manet himself who told me about this—and left the studio with her husband, wanting never to see the picture again."² In 1866, Manet wrote to his friend the poet Charles Baudelaire to say that he had sent two paintings to the annual Salon, "a portrait of the actor Philibert Rouvière in the role of Hamlet, which I am

OPPOSITE FIGURE 36 Édouard Manet, Isabelle Lemonnier with a Muff, 1879–82 Detail of figure 39



Édouard Manet, Portrait of Madame Brunet, c. 1860–63, reworked by 1867 J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles calling 'The Tragic Actor' to avoid the criticism of those who might not find it a good likeness—and a fifer of the Light Infantry Guard." These paintings are now quite well known: The Tragic Actor (fig. 38) is in the National Gallery of Art in Washington and the Fifer is in the Musée d'Orsay in Paris—but both were refused by the Salon jury that year. Manet's comments about The Tragic Actor indicate that he struggled with the problem of likeness and wanted to avoid being constrained by the expectations viewers might bring when looking at portraits.

These anecdotes point to more than a case of an artist failing to flatter a client or nervously anticipating critical responses to a Salon painting: they indicate that Manet's approach to portraiture was fundamentally different in its time and should, perhaps, be reassessed. After the Madame Brunet fiasco, Manet did not take on commissions for portraits. What portraits he did paint were usually of friends or at least people in his social circle. The Dallas Museum of Art's Isabelle Lemonnier with a Muff (figs. 36 and 39) is typical in this regard. It is one of a series of portraits of a young woman who was a regular part of Manet's social world in the late 1870s. In this essay, I consider the Dallas painting as representative of Manet's work in this period and, especially, of his interest in pleasure.

There are no great secrets when it comes to noting the traditional functions of portraiture, however sublime or enigmatic particular examples might be. Portraits were primarily meant to represent a likeness. They generally displayed the sitter's social status. As they also presented artists with opportunities to explore interiority or subjectivity, they have provided historians with visual evidence that is rich in suggestions of political, religious, and philosophical constructions of selfhood in different periods.

EIGURE 38 Édouard Manet, The Tragic Actor (Rouvière as Hamlet), 1866 National Gallery of Art, Washington





FIGURE 39 Édouard Manet, Isabelle Lemonnier with a Muff, 1879-82 Dallas Museum of Art

Louise Charlotte Isabelle Lemonnier was a daughter of Alexandre-Gabriel Lemonnier, jeweler to Napoleon III and Empress Eugénie. Manet created at least six oil portraits of Isabelle, and she figures in a number of letters he illustrated in watercolor. Unlike Victorine Meurent, whose status as a paid model facilitated her appearances nude or in costume in paintings such as Olympia (1863, Paris, Musée d'Orsay) and Mlle. V... in the Costume of an Espada (1862, New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art), Isabelle Lemonnier always appears as herself—a fashionable young woman. In this sense, the paintings of Lemonnier resemble those Manet did of the artist Berthe Morisot. As a woman of the haute bourgeoisie and of Manet's social world, Morisot consistently appears as herself, although in the late 1860s, she also made appearances in Salon-sized genre paintings such as The Balcony (1868-69, Paris, Musée d'Orsay).6

Does the sitter's relationship with Manet, then, determine the character of his portraits? Isabelle Lemonnier's status as an unmarried, upper-class woman presents certain infrangible norms. As was the case when Manet painted Morisot, whose mother chaperoned their sittings, Manet would never have dreamed of asking Lemonnier to pose nude, and it is difficult to imagine a request that she pose in costume, like a paid model. How do we apply these social norms to an analysis of Isabelle Lemonnier with a Muff? When she posed for the Dallas portrait, Lemonnier was twenty-two, Manet was forty-seven. His letters to her suggest that their relationship contained an element of (probably harmless) flirtation. If these facts and social conventions are taken as the basis for outlining the parameters of Manet's project in undertaking the portraits, there are two words that come to mind: desire and pleasure. Is the Dallas portrait evidence of "desire"? Or does the word "pleasure" allow us better to probe the work's formal qualities?

The historian and theorist Michel Foucault has written on desire in ways that are worth recalling here. Foucault questions the emphasis we often give to desire as the great secret of the individual, as something that, if we knew it, would be particularly revelatory. David Halperin recounts Foucault's stance in an interview: "It is very interesting to note, for instance, that for centuries people generally, as well as doctors, psychiatrists, and even liberation movements, have always spoken about desire, and never about pleasure. 'We have to liberate our desire,' they say. No! We have to create new pleasure. And then maybe desire will follow."

What is at stake in Foucault's shift of emphasis from desire to pleasure? What could we gain from this stance in art history? Many things. For one, we would not want our account of Manet's portraits of certain individuals—whether a wife, paid model, or subject of flirtatious attention—to turn on whether in the end a certain kind of relationship was involved. I think we can agree that such a dependence on biography is completely beside the point of our analysis of a painting. It is inaccessible to us, and as Foucault argues, it is all too easy for an account of desire to be medicalized, moralized, judged to be normal, abnormal, permissible or not. Foucault's interest in pleasure is linked with an interest in tearing down rigid categories of identity, in preventing "personal identity from becoming 'the law, the principle, the rule' of individual existence," as David Halperin has written. \*"Unlike desire, which expresses the subject's individuality, history, and identity as a subject,

Edouard Manet, At the Café, c. 1879 Walters Art Museum, Baltimore

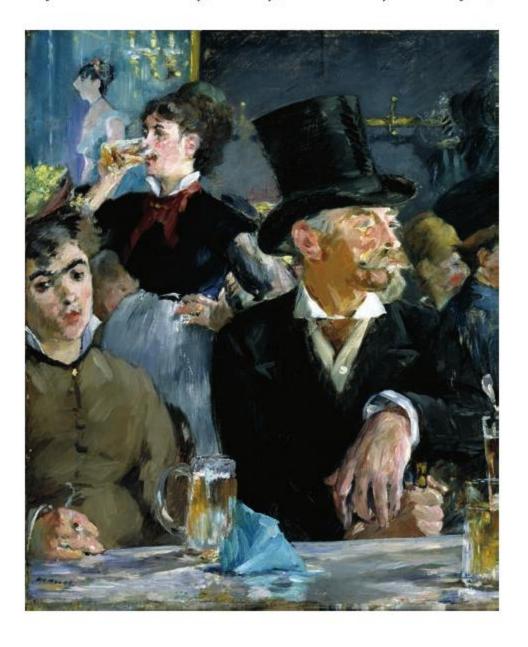




FIGURE 41 Édouard Manet, Mlle Isabelle Lemonnier, 1879–82 Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York

pleasure is desubjectivating, impersonal: it shatters identity, subjectivity, and dissolves the subject, however fleetingly, into the sensorial continuum of the body, into the unconscious dreaming of the mind."9

How, then, does Foucault's notion of pleasure pertain to Manet's approach to painting? Very closely and intricately, I would say. Let's take Manet's At the Café as an example (fig. 40). We are looking into the interior of the Cabaret de Reichshoffen on the boulevard Rochechouart, the setting for an even more ambitious painting that Manet cut into two separate works: At the Café (1878, Winterthur, Switzerland, Oskar Reinhart Collection "Am Römerholz") and Corner in a Café-Concert (1878-79, London, National Gallery). ™ In 1880, both the National Gallery canvas and the Walters canvas were included in Manet's exhibition at the gallery La Vie moderne, along with Mlle Isabelle Lemonnier (fig. 41), a pastel portrait of Isabelle Lemonnier closely related to the Dallas picture." The Walters painting is, in many ways, an emblem of Manet's work from the 1870s. The café-concert—essentially an upscale café with live entertainment and often a cover charge—appears as a densely populated space. The central figure—this man of the world with his crisp collar, cravat, and elegant hat, his hand leaning casually on his walking stick—turns to look toward the stage at the singer whose silvery reflection we see in the mirror. Behind him, a waitress quaffs something from a mug as she surveys the room. (Waitresses at café-concerts were asked to drink glasses of colored liquid as a way of encouraging the consumption of drinks.)12 Next to him is a woman who appears down on her luck. She has hardly touched her drink, and her downcast eyes, lack of interest in the performance, and cigarette suggest a person who may not be able to make ends meet (as many working women in the nineteenth century could not), and who sometimes resorts to clandestine prostitution.13 She may well be allowing the prosperous man to buy her more than a drink in exchange for the evening that lies ahead. Manet does not stop with his studies of the contrasting moral universes of these main figures; he gives us another figure in a blue smock at the bar—a figure whose face is completely cut off



Édouard Manet, Young Lady in 1866, 1866 Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York

by the side of the canvas-and a woman with blond hair in a bun, whom we glimpse to the right of the man. This face, smudged makeup and all, seems to be a late addition to the painting; perhaps Manet could not resist adding another sighting to the space between the figures. There is even another woman we can glimpse behind the waitress's apron, although her form is so summarily painted that it is difficult to say whether she looks keenly toward the performance or whether she stares out toward us and the woman whose status appears precarious. Manet seems to thrive on these kinds of ambiguities: space opening onto peering eyes, hat next to blond bun; the arm of the waitress blocking-but also blending in with-the arm of the singer's reflection. Manet's friend Antonin Proust described the artist's approach this way: "With Manet, the pleasure of painting was so great that, when faced with the spectacle that he had before his eyes, whether a still-life, a living being, or a landscape, he couldn't stop himself from searching for simplicity, in disengaging it from the complicated and the dense." Although Manet did not, in my view, always aim for "simplicity," I think that Proust is right to value Manet's ability to tease forms out of a dense perceptual thicket, whether of objects or figures, and to create alluring juxtapositions of them.

The Walters picture is not anomalous; it joins not only the other caféconcert paintings of the late 1870s but also A Bar at the Folies-Bergère (1882, London, Courtauld Gallery), Music in the Tuileries Gardens (1862, London, National Gallery), and Masked Ball at the Opera (1873, Washington, National Gallery of Art) in creating pictures of crowds that draw the viewer into a play of differentiation. Foucault's terms come to mind as a description of the effects Manet found here: pleasure is desubjectivating in the way it allows one to dissolve into a sensory experience. I would suggest that, in these paintings of visual and moral instabilities in a crowd, Manet enables the viewer to experience a kind

of intense and intoxicating pleasure; the café atmosphere becomes a site for what Foucault called "desubjectivization." As the philosopher elaborates: "It's not the affirmation of identity that's important, it's the affirmation of nonidentity. . . . It's an important experience in which one invents, for as long as one wants, pleasures which one fabricates together [with others]."15 It may seem strange to found a claim for a kind of philosophy in what is, at base, a collection of momentary and fragmented perceptions, reenacted in a painting of even more ephemeral pleasures such as listening to music, having a cigarette, drinking, or losing oneself in the glittering atmosphere of the café.

At stake here is a notion of pleasure rooted in the senses. The experience of the senses had long been integral to Manet's conception of what painting needed to explore - Young Lady in 1866 (fig. 42) being a good example. This is, in all likelihood, the painting of Victorine Meurent that Manet completed after the notorious *Olympia*; it is resolutely *not* the nude Victorine, but the model in a dressing gown. Yet Manet also wants to put forward his particular take on seventeenth-century Dutch painting that often allegorized sensory experience.16 For realist painters in the middle of the nineteenth century, the experience of the senses was not something to be allegorized; it was something to be given to the viewer directly. Such a statement became a philosophical position; it was part of the materialist view of the world (with materialism understood in the philosophical sense, as the opposite of spiritualism; materialism as the insistence that the world is composed of matter). Manet's stance against idealization, against metaphysics, places him in line politically with contemporary proponents of science, empiricism, and progressive politics. What most writers on Manet have long seen as his materialism also admits of the notion of pleasure put forward in Foucault's late work, a notion that has the force of a philosophical stance or even philosophical activity.

It seems likely that Manet and Isabelle Lemonnier met at the salon of her older sister, Marguérite-Louise Charpentier, who was married to Georges



FIGURE 43 Auguste Renoir, Madame Georges Charpentier and Her Children, Georgette-Berthe and Paul-Émile-Charles, 1878 Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York

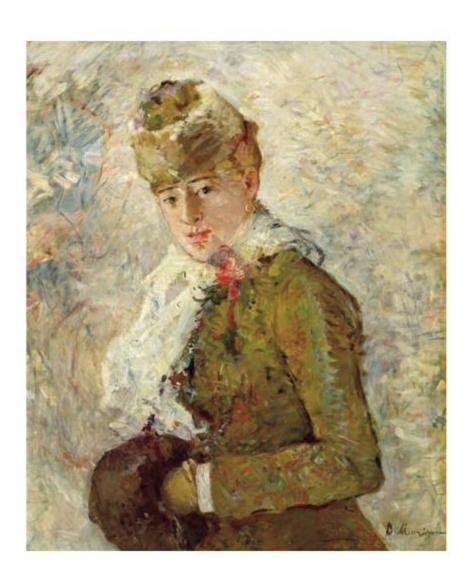


FIGURE 44 Berthe Morisot, Winter (Woman with a Muff), 1880 Dallas Museum of Art

Charpentier, the progressive publisher and art dealer. The gatherings, on the rue de Grenelle, included such notables as the statesmen Léon Gambetta and Georges Clemenceau. As the publisher of Zola, the late Flaubert, and Edmond de Goncourt, Charpentier had aligned himself politically with realism and naturalism in literature. Museum-goers know the family primarily through the famous portrait Renoir did of Isabelle's sister, Madame Georges Charpentier and Her Children, Georgette-Berthe and Paul-Émile-Charles (fig. 43). Georges Charpentier established the gallery La Vie moderne on the boulevard des Italiens in Paris and published the periodical La Vie moderne. In April of 1880, Manet exhibited twenty-five works at La Vie moderne, including several of the café pictures, a sensitive genre portrait of his wife, Suzanne, and her son Léon, Reading (c. 1865-73, Paris, Musée d'Orsay), and several pastel portraits, including one of the Irish critic and novelist George Moore (1873–79, New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art). Most of these works were new, and Manet had not had a solo exhibition on this scale since the one he staged at the time of the 1867 Universal Exposition. Another world's fair had come and gone in 1878; Manet had hoped to put up another independent exhibition, but in the end, he did not, and he had withheld works from the judgment of the Salon jury that year. Although he exhibited in a number of Salons, including the Salon that opened a month after the show at La Vie moderne, he had also in the intervening years exhibited out of his studio, even as he decided not to exhibit with the impressionists. The show at La Vie moderne was, then, the most important exhibition of Manet's later career, and it was linked by familial ties with the model for the Dallas portrait.

Our first impressions of the Dallas picture reveal a notable level of unfinish. An aesthetic of the sketch had long been part of Manet's practice, and a light, open facture had become integral to Berthe Morisot's style in the 1870s. 
The Dallas Museum's Winter (Woman with a Muff) by Morisot, from 1880 (fig. 44), confirms this. I think that even a brief comparison of the two, however, shows that Morisot makes a latticelike open style consistent almost from corner to

corner of her canvas. Manet's painting, by contrast, offers us a painting at distinctly different levels of finish, almost a catalogue of the painting process itself. The head and bust of Isabelle Lemonnier present real definition and three-dimensionality; we see the turn of the trim on her coat, the blue ribbon that secures her hat under her chin, the curls of hair on her forehead that catch the light (figs. 36 and 39). Although there are unblended patches of paint on her face, the modeling is consistent, and subtle gradations in value define her nose and model her cheek. Her upper body in its coat, by contrast, begins to flatten; there is an effect of shadow along her back, but the main passage of painting in this bodice area is a brown that is quite flat. Modernist critics are very fond of pointing out areas of Manet's paintings in which there is no trace of any sculptural dimension and in which the possibility of reading the illusion of the object—in this case, a coat—turns back into paint. The modernist reading is apposite here. Of course Manet and the impressionists came under the spell of Japanese woodblock prints and frequently played off similar effects of bold contours and flatness, in many cases maximizing our recognition that we are looking at the translucency of oil paint, not at a print. There is a comparable play of effects here. Then there is the lower area of the painting, in which we can see the canvas ground, the initial lay-in, and the drawing. It reads as an extremely raw exposure of the mechanics of painting. We can see not only where the flatness of the middle section comes from, but also where the modeling of the upper section originates. And we are seeing something else, too. Look at the blur of gray along the contour. Look at the overdrawing along the back of the coat, the doubling of contour around the muff. These additional shadows and contours have another reference point: the blur we often see in nineteenth-century photographs with their long exposures. Photography had, by the late 1850s, begun to make a significant contribution to the art of portraiture. A photographic portrait had the potential to be no more than a record of the subject's exteriority and physicality, hence the efforts



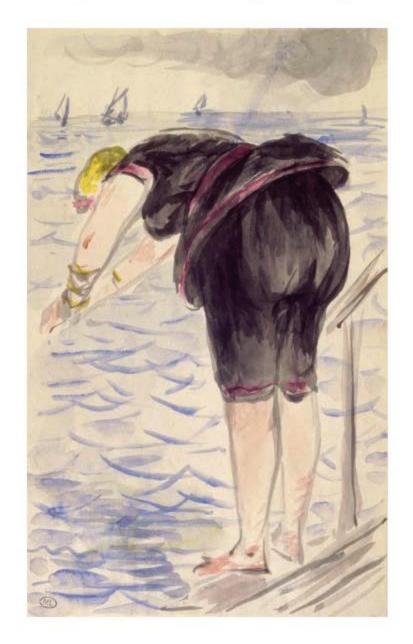
FIGURE 45 Baudelaire, photograph by Nadar, 1855 Musée d'Orsay, Paris

by Nadar, Julia Margaret Cameron, and other great portraitists to work with lighting and pose in order to convey some sense of artistic mood or interiority. Seen against Nadar's *Baudelaire* (fig. 45), Manet's coat seems both to recall the blur of the photograph and to propose a deconstruction of the procedures and effects of painting. If the photographic portrait had cornered the market on likeness, then painting—in Manet's hands—could refer to photography even as it proclaimed that portraiture did not have to limit itself to likeness.

Isabelle Lemonnier recalls sitting for the portraits: "Manet didn't know how to draw. He was always beginning my portraits over again. He destroyed I don't know how many studies right in front of me. If I had asked him for them, he would have certainly given them to me. But I already had so many portraits."19 Her experience tallies with that of other sitters such as Berthe Morisot.20 I think that Manet's myriad fresh starts tell us something important that supersedes Lemonnier's insouciance about his discarded canvases. Looking at some of Manet's illustrated letters to Isabelle Lemonnier, we could say that, insomuch as he loved to draw and to define form with a certain directness, an elegant understatedness, a playful interest in abbreviating, summarizing, even almost caricaturing—as in his watercolor of Isabelle diving (fig. 46)—Manet also loved to create a form that remained open. This we can see in the distance between the watercolor sketches in the letters and the face of the Dallas portrait, Lemonnier's arched brow, the upturned corners of her mouth, her gaze in our direction can all be seen as pleasant and engaging. At the same time, a slight air of detachment remains. Manet is often at pains as a painter to prohibit one reading from being dominant or stable. An

Édouard Manet, Isabelle Diving, 1880 Musée du Louvre, Paris

Edouard Manet, George Moore in the Artist's Garden, c. 1879 National Gallery of Art, Washington





oil painting of George Moore (fig. 47) displays a relaxed informality but also a briskness on Manet's part. This is no accident or product of a lack of finish or resolution. It is a deliberate technique on Manet's part, as intentional as his addition of extra figures in the spaces of his crowded café scenes. His play between definition and an unraveling of definitiveness, or an opening-up of the picture to different readings, lies at the heart of the experience of modernity he wants to offer his viewers. If his café scenes re-create the pleasurable experience of losing oneself in the crowd, his portraits avoid a slavish devotion to likeness and thus allow a similar (pleasurable) dissolution of boundaries between viewer and subject.

Manet and Isabelle Lemonnier were friends. He was a quarter century her senior and already in poor health. He liked to flirt with her. The portrait cannot be taken entirely out of this context of gallant friendship, but neither can it be seen as merely a record of that friendship or the attraction, for a middleaged man, of a vivacious young woman. The engaging quality of her gaze and the openness of the work to more than one reading of her expression testify to Manet's stance as a modernist painter. In painting Isabelle Lemonnier, he gives us not only identities and the desires that reinforce them, but also the open-endedness of pleasures in the plural—his own and ours.

- Wivel 1989, 64–67; Wilson-Bareau 1991b, 129. The
   J. Paul Getty Museum notes that some uncertainty remains about the sitter's identity; see Allan 2011.
- "Toujours est-il que, lorsqu'elle se vit sur la toile, telle qu'elle y figurait, elle se mit à pleurer—c'est Manet lui-même qui me l'a dit—et qu'elle sortit de l'atelier, avec son mari, sans vouloir jamais revoir le portrait" (Duret 1918, 149–50, trans. in Cachin, Moffett, and Wilson-Bareau 1983, 53–54).
- "J'ai envoyé à l'exposition deux tableaux; je compte en faire des photographies et vous en envoyer. Un portrait de Rouvière dans le role d'Hamlet, que j'appelle l'acteur tragique pour éviter la critique des gens qui ne le trouveraient pas ressemblant, -et un fifre de voltigeurs de la garde; mais il faut voir les tableaux pour s'en faire une juste idée" (Manet to Baudelaire, 27 March 1866, in Pichois 1973, 238-39).

- 4. See Wittmann 2004.
- 5. Lehmbeck 2007, 252.
- Locke 2001, 147–71.
- Foucault in a 1982 interview, quoted by Bob Gallagher and Alexander Wilson; see Foucault 1997, 166.
- Halperin 1995, 95, quoting Foucault; compare with Foucault, Morar, and Smith 2011, 388–90.
- 9. Halperin 1995, 95.
- Wilson-Bareau and Park 2008.
- 11. Wilson-Bareau 1991a, 245.
- 12. Gronberg 1984, 336.
- Clayson 1991, 134–53;
   Gronberg 1984, 329–44;
   Clark 1984, 244–45.
- 14. "Chez lui, le plaisir de peindre était si grand que devant le spectacle qu'il avait sous les yeux, que ce fût une nature morte, un être vivant ou un paysage, il ne pouvait s'empêcher de rechercher la simplicité, en la dégageant du compliqué et du touffu" (Proust 1913, 147).

- Foucault, quoted in Halperin 1995, 94.
- Connolly 1972, 25–27,
   Mauner 1975, 136; Hadler 1973, 122.
- 17. Brown 2006, 528-29.
- See Armstrong 2002, 259–67.
- 19. "Manet ne savait pas dessiner, nous contait-elle avec sa verve habituelle, il recommençait sans cesse mes portraits. Il a détruit devant moi je ne sais combien d'études. Si je les lui avais demandées, il me les aurait certainement données. Mais j'avais déjà tant de portraits . . ."

  (Robida 1958, 119; trans. in Brombert 1996, 426; ellipses in original).
- 20. Morisot 1950, 25, 35.



## The Ironies of Beauty

Claude Monet's The Seine at Lavacourt

PAUL HAYES TUCKER

Claude Monet's stunning view of the Seine at Lavacourt (figs. 48 and 49) is one of the largest, most visually accommodating paintings that the artist produced during the second decade of his career. It is rendered with a keen eye to telling detail—the spray of river grass in the immediate foreground, for example—and with what appears to be deep feeling for this stretch of France's national river near the house Monet was renting in rural Vétheuil, approximately thirty-seven miles north of Paris. Its light is crystalline and utterly charming, its palette of soft earth colors and sky blues as gentle as the spring air that fills the scene, its facture lovingly controlled, its spatial range breathtaking and bountiful. How then could it have almost ruptured the group of artists who called themselves impressionists?

This is a story of intrigue and backbiting, manipulation of the press and shortages of money, risk taking and self-preservation. It sounds like a tabloid tale more fitting for our own times, but it is rooted in the complex history of impressionism and what it meant to be an avant-garde artist in the years following France's humiliating defeat in the Franco-Prussian War of 1870–71. It also is grounded in the personal challenges Monet faced at the end of that decade and the difficult decisions he had to make at a time of professional crisis.

One thing is certain and often reiterated: The Seine at Lavacourt ranks among Monet's most important early works. Part of its significance lies in its extraordinary handling. Every mark of the brush seems deliberate, especially those describing the Seine. Note how Monet painstakingly sets down white highlights atop carefully arranged shades of blue, the latter subtly suggesting the depths of the water, the former indicating the flowing, sun-dappled surface with its multiple reflections of sky and land (fig. 50). The touches of white are strongly differentiated and quite varied but are all approximately the same consistency of impasto. They also tend to move horizontally across the canvas, and they regularly diminish in size from the foreground to the background, contributing to the impressive unity of the scene.

The river grasses in the immediate foreground, like the larger grasses in the middle ground, provide telling contrasts of color, touch, and movement. Darker than the waters, they shoot up from the bottom of the canvas in rapid succession, like staccato notes in a musical score. The bulkier bush in the middle ground is denser but conversely lighter in tone, its greens as varied as the descriptive marks of Monet's versatile brush. It comprises competing

OPPOSITE
FIGURE 48
Claude Monet,
The Seine at Lavacourt, 1880
Detail of figure 49



Claude Monet, The Seine at Lavacourt, 1880 Dallas Museum of Art

jostling tufts, heightening the sense of activity generated by the shimmering highlights of the river. Most of the tufts move diagonally from left to right in contrast to their reflections and the foreground reeds. Its counterpart upriver to the left is different again; coagulated brushstrokes indicate even more entangled foliage, while its surge to the right suggests that it is mounting the nearby sandbar as if to bask on that warm expanse instead of enduring the river's unceasing rush.

Both bushes rise high enough to touch the distant shore, where the beige edge repeats the color of the sandbars in the river and a richer, yellower green grass offers another example of Monet's keen color sense, something that is also apparent in the deeper, more olive greens of the trees farther up the bank. Those trees, artfully marshaled to contrast in tone, texture, and feeling with the sun-bleached houses of Lavacourt (fig. 51), stand like sentinels screening the village, particularly those on the far left, which are tightly grouped before arching to the right to offer further protection. The two tallest trees with their distinctive twisting tops frame the bush in the middle ground and soar high above the village, providing a welcome vertical break to an otherwise rigorous horizon. Like every tree, each house is individualized by its height and position on the bank, as well as by its roofline, chimney, and orientation. Even the fenestration varies, underscoring the town's picturesque appeal, a characteristic enhanced by the wholesome, supportive way the houses nudge up against one another. Everything about the place seems calm, just, and solid. Monet includes figures along the bank as if to encourage this humanistic reading of the scene. Capping the landscape is the cloud-studded sky that stretches across the expanse of canvas with the same compelling combination of regularity and variety that distinguishes everything below.

The intelligence that Monet applied to the execution of the painting is also evident in the way he constructed the view. The river occupies almost exactly as much of the canvas as the sky does, creating a symmetry that appears entirely appropriate, with the banks on the left and center neatly contained between these more dominant areas. Even the houses seem perfectly mated to the trees along the shore. The spray of river grass in the immediate foreground adds the only unexpected note to this otherwise distilled image of rural tranquility, although it is located in the most harmonious of spots—just to the left of center—thereby balancing the houses and trees of the village. By placing the stalks at the bottom edge of the canvas, Monet not only engenders a sense of immediacy but also allows us to feel that we are standing on a slightly elevated portion of the bank that is firm and secure.

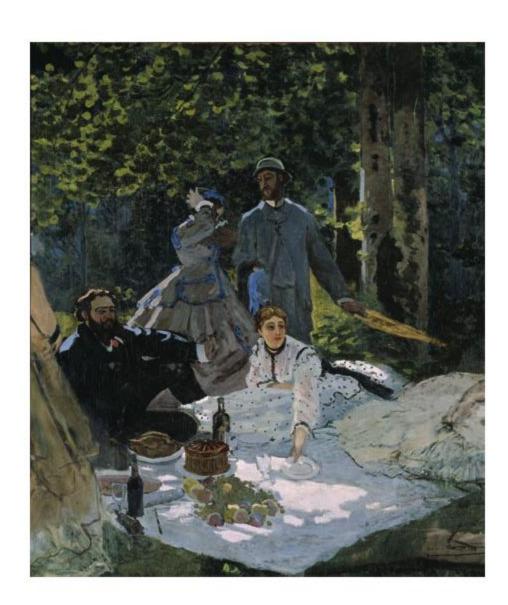
The specific dimensions of the canvas contribute to the impression of mastery that the rendering of the site suggests. It measures approximately thirty-nine by fifty-nine inches, which means that it is just about one and a half times as long as it is high, proportions that effect deeply satisfying relationships throughout the picture. Monet most likely purchased the canvas already stretched as it is almost identical to what was known in the nineteenth century as a standard "landscape number 80," which measured about thirty-eight by fifty-seven and a half inches—one of the biggest canvases commercially available for landscape art.¹ Monet had painted a handful of pictures on larger canvases in years past, but nearly all were figure paintings, decorative landscapes, or modern-history paintings, such as Luncheon on the Grass of 1865–66 (fig. 52). Only three other pure landscape or seascape paintings were larger than The Seine at Lavacourt, and they were all from the 1860s.

An appreciation of the size of The Seine at Lavacourt and the care with which Monet painted it is essential to an understanding of the work's significance because the picture was conceived and executed with a very specific audience in mind—the jury of the annual Salon and the visitors to that all-important venue for contemporary art in nineteenth-century France. The jury was notoriously conservative; its members believed they were upholding time-honored

FIGURES 50 AND 51 Claude Monet, The Seine at Lavacourt, 1880 Details of figure 49







Claude Monet, Luncheon on the Grass, 1865–66 Musée d'Orsay, Paris

criteria for art making on which individual greatness and the nation's reputation rested. The severity of their verdicts varied from year to year, but their inflexibility and aesthetic limitations were well known.

Monet bided his time before first submitting a work to this adjudicating group, eventually risking their judgments with two submissions in 1865, when he was twenty-four: La Pointe de la Hève at Low Tide (fig. 53) and The Mouth of the Seine at Honfleur, a painting that is now lost. Both were accepted, a remarkable feat for someone with no commercial reputation and no backing from an established artist who might have swayed a jury member. The Salon gave artists the opportunity to be noticed by critics, collectors, and fellow artists and, if they were lucky, to develop a market, perhaps even go down in history. Monet achieved the first goal in 1865 when his works were singled out for praise by respected critics of the day. The following year he was again successful, with a light-filled view of a road in the Forest of Fontainebleau and Camille, a nearly life-sized portrait (see fig. 20). Critics once more gave him ample attention, and the portrait was caricatured several times in the popular press, a mark of distinction. A promising career appeared to be in the making for the young man from the ninth arrondissement in Paris.

Those prospects dimmed considerably, however, over the next few years. Only one more of Monet's paintings was accepted by the jury, a track record shared by most of his small circle of friends who would eventually become known as the impressionists. So upset were these artists that, in 1868, several, including Monet, signed a letter to the minister of culture protesting the jury's bias and calling for an independent Salon, demands that went unheeded. Among themselves they talked of organizing their own exhibition but those plans did not materialize until 1874, when they staged what became known as the first impressionist exhibition, held in the studios of the photographer Nadar on the boulevard des Capucines in the heart of the capital. This now-famous

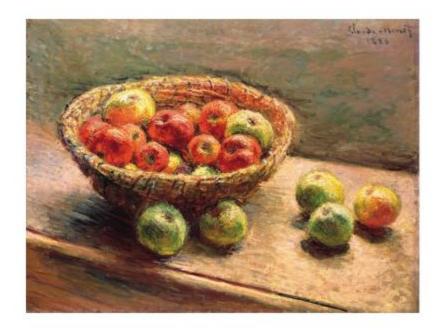
exhibition, so often cited in the history of art as one of the touchstones of modernist practices, actually generated more positive reviews than negative ones (contrary to most accounts of the event), but it also provoked some nasty remarks that have lived on in infamy. The impressionists ignored "the most elemental rules of painting and drawing"; their paintings were "appalling . . . mud-splashes" executed in a "slap-dash" fashion and an "assault on artistic principles, the cult of form, and the Masters." Many of these familiar rants were repeated by conservative critics in response to the three subsequent exhibitions that the impressionists mounted during the decade, in 1876, 1877, and 1879.

Monet participated in all four shows during the 1870s, shunning the Salon as did most of his fellow impressionists. His submissions to each were carefully calculated. For example, in the first show, he included more pastels than paintings, believing the former to be most likely to generate sales and deflect criticism of his looser paint handling. For the next three, he showed more paintings from private collections than ones that were available for purchase (a remarkable twenty-four of twenty-nine in 1879), as if to indicate his commercial success and make his work more desirable. Wisely, he always included the names of his patrons in the exhibition catalogues.

In reviews of each of these exhibitions, Monet received many favorable comments. In 1874, for example, Ernest Chesneau called his Boulevard des Capucines "a masterpiece . . . that went a long way into the future." In 1876, Émile Zola, the impressionists' most enthusiastic supporter in the 1860s, hailed Monet as "incontestably the head of the group." In the same year, even the conservative critic Charles Bigot, who roundly disparaged some of the artist's submissions, still affirmed that he was "a true landscapist." It might seem strange, therefore, that Monet decided in late 1879 to return to the Salon for the first time in nearly a decade. Why would he abandon his friends and retreat to what he himself described as the "circus" of the official exhibition?

FIGURE 53 Claude Monet, La Pointe de la Hève at Low Tide, 1865 Kimbell Art Museum, Fort Worth







Claude Monet, A Basket of Apples, 1880 Private collection

FIGURE 55 Claude Monet, The Ice Floes, 1880 Shelburne Museum, Shelburne, Vermont

The primary motivation was economic. After eight years of unprecedented earnings, the artist was confronted with serious personal and financial concerns. First, Camille Doncieux, whom he had married in 1870 and who had borne him two sons, had fallen gravely ill. She died in the first week of September 1879. At the time, the Monets had been sharing their house with his patrons, Ernest and Alice Hoschedé. After moving their family from Argenteuil to Paris in 1878, and then from the capital to Vétheuil in 1879, the Monets had invited the Hoschedés and their children to move in with their family of four because Ernest had declared bankruptcy and had lost his family's apartment in Paris, their country house, and all of their possessions, which were sold at auction. Ernest and Alice had six children; their move to Vétheuil made for a ménage à douze, not including domestic servants. That was a lot of mouths to feed, bodies to clothe, and babies to care for. Monet's earnings in 1878 had been only 4,000 francs, much less than previous years. To earn that sum, he had taken to selling smaller, less finished works, sometimes for paltry sums, such as the five sketches of Vétheuil that he sold to one of his primary supporters, the Romanian doctor and collector Georges de Bellio, for 125 francs. As Zola noted, this was not a good idea as it meant Monet was putting works into circulation that did not represent his real artistic abilities and served only to confirm doubters' assertions that the impressionists really couldn't paint.7 Monet's friend and fellow impressionist Camille Pissarro understood the danger of these decisions. "Let us make good pictures," he pleaded to their mutual friend Gustave Caillebotte in 1879. "Let us not exhibit sketches, let us be very disciplined with our pictures—that is better, don't you think?"8

Discouraged by the reception his work was generating, Monet felt overwhelmed by his unusual responsibilities and admitted to de Bellio in March of 1879: "I am giving up the struggle as well as all hope. I don't have the strength to work anymore under these conditions." According to one source, he even stooped to painting a portrait of a local artist in Vétheuil in exchange for a pair of boots. To bolster his finances, the beleaguered artist started to paint still lifes, hoping they would be more marketable than the steam-filled sheds of the Gare Saint-Lazare that had preoccupied him in 1877 or the modern suburban scenes he had painted in Argenteuil previously. Between the summer of 1878 and the same time in 1880, he completed no fewer than twenty dazzling images of dead birds, fruits, and flowers (fig. 54). They constituted nearly half the still lifes he painted during his entire career. His strategy paid off. The canvases sold almost as quickly as they came off his easel. But they did not earn him enough money to support the combined Monet-Hoschedé household. Developing a larger clientele seemed to be his only solution.

Monet made his intentions clear in a letter to his friend the critic Théodore Duret: "I am working hard on three large canvases only two of which [are] for the Salon as the other is too much to my taste for me to send it and have it refused. I have done instead one of them wiser, more bourgeois." The more bourgeois painting obviously was The Seine at Lavacourt. The two others were The Ice Floes and Sunset, Lavacourt (figs. 55 and 56). The former was the one he intended to submit to the Salon jury along with the Dallas painting, but the latter was more to his liking. Both differ substantially from The Seine at Lavacourt. Sunset, Lavacourt is dark and brooding, its surface lathered with highly independent touches of rich impasto, its color scheme far more contrasted, and its sense of the moment ever more fleeting. The Ice Floes, although not as radical, is similarly daring in its facture: Monet's brush is boldly evident throughout the scene, far more so than in The Seine at Lavacourt. His use of lights and darks is more aggressive than in the Dallas painting and his vantage point more precarious.

These differences and the frank admission to Duret make it clear that the care with which Monet executed *The Seine at Lavacourt* was entirely purposeful. In fact, he went a step further and based the painting not on direct observation but on smaller canvases, including *View of the Seine, Lavacourt* (fig. 57), that he had done of the exact same site, which he had revisited no fewer than seven times in 1878 and 1879. Comparison with these earlier works also underscores how methodically Monet distilled the scene. He included only one spray of river grass in the foreground instead of the many in the Fogg version, for example, and only one spray by the larger bushes in the middle ground; he tightened the outline of those bushes, clarified the sandbars, and softened the clouds. These alterations make the Dallas painting more refined and removed, more the product of focused thought than of inspiration, of the studio and not of the banks of the Seine, an approach that the sheer size of the canvas itself suggests—it is simply too large to have been carried every day from his house to the river.

Little wonder, then, that *The Ice Floes* was rejected by the jury of 1880, that *The Seine at Lavacourt* was accepted, and that this more "bourgeois" canvas received favorable notices even though it was skied in an upper row of paintings and thus difficult to see. It more than met the requirements for control and refinement so prized by supporters of traditional art. To them, it evoked the classicism of France's greatest landscape painters, Camille Corot and Claude Lorrain and, according to Philippe de Chennevières, the former head of the

FIGURE 56 Claude Monet, Sunset, Lavacourt, 1880 Musée des Beaux-Arts de la Ville de Paris, Petit-Palais, Paris

Claude Monet, View of the Seine, Lavacourt, 1880 Fogg Museum, Harvard Art Museums, Cambridge, Massachusetts





fine arts administration, was so light filled that it made all the neighboring landscapes in the room appear black by comparison. <sup>12</sup> The Ice Floes could never have prompted such claims.

Monet's decision to return to the Salon did not go unnoticed in the press. Indeed, five months before he submitted his paintings to the jury, an anonymous reporter writing for the major Parisian daily *Le Gaulois* posted a mock funeral notice announcing, to Monet's "ex-friends, ex-students, and ex-supporters," the death of the arch-impressionist. The accompanying article, although brief, was acerbic. The writer asserted that "in a few days, M. Claude Monet, impressionist par excellence, will desert the friendly camp to throw himself, body, soul, and brushes, into the bosom maternal of Monsieur Cabanel [a major academic painter]. . . . Tremble, children of the new school . . . your friend is abandoning you; he is deserting." This was backbiting of the worst order, the article planted, it seems, by someone in the impressionist circle or one of its allies who was intimately familiar with Monet and displeased with his presumed defection. Monet and Ernest Hoschedé both wrote letters to the editor, but neither letter was published.

Ever wily, Monet waited for the opportune moment to ensure a public rejoinder. That came six months later in June 1880, a month after the opening of the Salon, just when he had mounted his first one-person exhibition in the galleries of the new Parisian periodical La Vie moderne. Monet hoped that this second venue would also allow him to regain his footing among critics and collectors, as there he would be seen on his own, not with the much-criticized impressionists. The magazine ran a long article on him that was intended to be mutually beneficial, and Monet viewed it as an opportunity to counter his detractors. When the interviewer Émile Taboureaux asserted that he no longer saw Monet's name on the roster of impressionist events, the thirtynine-year-old artist exploded: "You're wrong. I still am and always will be an impressionist. I am the one after all who invented the word. . . . But except on a rare occasion, I hardly see my colleagues any more. . . . Our little temple has become a dull schoolroom, whose doors are open to any dauber. And the public, which started laughing before a grotesque painting . . . doesn't stop splitting its sides until it is back out on the street."

Such public bickering, which had never occurred before among the impressionists, indicates the pressure they were under at the end of the decade. Their exhibitions had not succeeded in broadening their client base. Nor had the denigration abated. Even though they must have seemed "pathetically predictable," as Richard Brettell has wisely pointed out, 15 and even though they were always balanced by supportive statements, the rebukes voiced by conservative critics persisted. Even Zola began to fault his former friends for their lack of finish, 16 a change of heart that led to his devastating 1886 novel The Masterpiece (L'Oeuvre), which was a veritable condemnation of the movement.

Some of the impressionists' problems were structural. In consistently renting commercial spaces, they were behaving like the growing number of dealers, who were attempting to expand their own markets in an increasingly competitive environment. In addition, the impressionists had declined to suggest any hierarchy among the exhibitors. There was no favoritism when it came to hanging, for example, and no awards for participants or special prizes for specific works, factors that had underscored the tiered considerations of the



Gabriel Amable de La Foulhouze, Sunday at Bellevue, 1874 Private collection

Salon, but that also had allowed the public to understand more clearly what the jury's criteria had been, no matter how skewed they might be considered. By leveling the playing field, the impressionists made no distinctions about the quality of the work displayed, a problem that would soon cause serious divisions among the founding members of the group.

The impressionists were also trying to establish themselves at one of the most trying times in the country's recent history. In the spring of 1871, while the Prussians laid siege to Paris, the Commune insurrection erupted in the capital, resulting in government troops slaughtering between twenty and thirty thousand citizens. To end the war, France was forced to sign an excruciating armistice that included payment to the victors of an indemnity of 5 billion francs and ceding to them the departments of Alsace and Lorraine. Following the war, an economic crisis shook the nation, creating a prolonged depression aggravated by conservative politics and continual retrenchment. All of this naturally affected the art market. When, for example, Ernest Hoschedé sold most of his impressionist collection in 1878, prices were pitifully low, especially for Monet's works.

Another problem began to haunt the impressionists. For all of their apparent radicalism, they were actually being imitated. Zola noted this as early as 1878: "Thus we are witnessing the following astonishing spectacle: a small group of artists, persecuted, ridiculed in the press, never spoken of without side-splitting mirth, nonetheless function as the inspirers of the official pictures in the Salons from which they are excluded." These imitators were not just taking their canvases out of doors to capture particular effects with greater vivacity (fig. 58), they were also appropriating subjects that once had been the purview of the avant-garde—luncheons on the grass, for example, immortalized in Édouard Manet's iconic painting of 1863 and quickly reprised by Monet in 1865 (fig. 52), as well as scenes of modern life in Paris and its suburbs. It appears, therefore, only natural that Monet would try something different—paint a huge picture that would demonstrate his clear mastery of his craft and affirm his acute sensibility to the nuances of nature, all to claim his position as one of the country's leading landscape painters. No one could

do what he could do, he declares in *The Seine at Lavacourt*, and all who try are merely imitators.

History can be cruel. Despite the good notices it attracted during the run of the Salon, the painting did not sell. In fact, it did not find an owner until the following February and then it was Monet's primary dealer, Paul Durand-Ruel, who, after a long hiatus, had begun to buy contemporary art again. But even he could not place it until 1886, when the savvy salesman took it to New York as part of his first venture into the American market, an initiative that, ironically, Monet strongly opposed. (Monet believed the gallery should have been establishing impressionism in France.) Together with eleven other paintings by Monet, Durand-Ruel sold The Seine at Lavacourt to the obscure collector Alden Wyman Kingman. Durand-Ruel bought the picture back from Kingman in 1895. His gallery held it until 1938, when his son sold it to the Dallas Museum of Art. Monet's quintessential French landscape, having never been in a French collection other than Durand-Ruel's, ended up in an emerging museum in a state that could not have been more dissimilar to Monet's native land. That it holds pride of place in the Dallas Museum of Art's esteemed collection is the final irony in this tale of twists and turns, just as "the land of the Yankees," as Monet once disparagingly called America, 18 became one of the greatest champions of his remarkable achievement.

For the most complete bibliography on *The Seine at Lavacourt*, see Baillio 2007, 306–307.

- Bomford 1990, 46.
- See for example, Mantz 1865, 26. The now-lost painting, The Mouth of the Seine at Honfleur, was reproduced in the souvenir album L'Autographe au Salon de 1865 et dans les ateliers, no. 9 (June 24, 1865): 76.
- The soon-to-be celebrated novelist Émile Zola claimed that Camille captured his attention more than any other painting in the exhibition ("Le Salon de 1866: V. Les réalistes aux salon," L'Événement, May 11, 1866, 3). The caricatures of the painting appeared in Bertall, "Le Salon de 1866," Le Journal amusant, May 12, 1866, 3, and Gill, "Le Salon pour rire," La Lune, May 13, 1866, 1.
- On the exhibition in 1874, see Paul Hayes Tucker, "The First Impressionist Exhibition in Context," in

Moffett et al. 1986, 92-117. For the reviews: "Cette école [the impressionists] supprime deux choses: la ligne sans laquelle il est impossible de reproduire la forme d'un être animé ou d'une chose, et la couleur qui donne à la forme l'apparence de la réalité. ... c'est tout simplement la négation des règles les plus élémentaires du dessin et de la peinture" (Émile Cardon, "Avant le Salon: L'Éxposition des révoltés," La Presse, April 29, 1874, 3); and "C'est toi [Corot] qui a mis à la mode cette facture lâchée, ces frottis, ces éclaboussures [of the impressionists] . . . ces taches [on Monet's Boulevard des Capucines] ont été obtenues par le procédé qu'on emploie pour le badigeonnage des granits de fontaine: Pifl Paf!V'li!V'lan!Va comme je te pousse! C'est inouï, effroyable! . . . non pas attentatoire aux bonnes mœurs artistiques, au culte de la forme et au respect des maîtres " (Louis Leroy, "L'Exposition

- des impressionnistes," Le Charivari, April 25, 1874, 79–80); both reprinted in Berson 1996, 25 and 13, respectively.
- 5. Tucker, in Moffett et al. 1986, 108. For the reviews: "On salue un chef-d'œuvre . . . il porte loin dans l'avenir" (Ernest Chesneau, "À côté du Salon. II. Le Plein Air: Exposition du boulevard des Capucines," Paris-Journal, May 7, 1874, 2; reprinted in Le Soir, May 7, 1874, 3); "Claude Monet est incontestablement le chef du groupe. Son pinceau se distingue par un éclat extraordinaire" (Zola 1876, 903, reprinted in Zola 1974, 182-86, with a variant in Le Sémaphore de Marseille, April 30-May 1, 1876); and "M. Claude Monet a de la vigueur dans la main et l'œil d'un véritable paysagiste" (Charles Bigot, "Causerie artistique: L'Éxposition des 'intransigeants'," La Revue politique et litteraire, April 8, 1876); all three reprinted in Berson 1996, 17-19, 111-13, and 59-62, respectively.

- 6. On Monet's earnings in the 1870s, see Tucker 1982, 194-95n.33, and Stuckey and Shaw 1995, 204.
- 7. "Bien des ébauches sont sorties de son atelier, dans les heures difficiles, et cela ne vaut rien. . . . Quand on se satisfait trop aisément, quand on livre un esquisse à peine sèche, on perd le goût des morceaux longuement étudiés; c'est l'étude qui fait les œuvres solides. M. Monet porte aujourd'hui la peine de sa hâte, de son besoin de vendre" (Zola 1959, 245).
- "Faisons de bons tableaux, n'exposons pas d'esquisses, soyant très sévères pour nos tableaux, cela vaut mieux, qu'en pensez-vous? Car le public se rebute aux esquisses les plus belles, c'est un prétexte" (Pissarro to Caillebotte, late March 1878; see Bailly-Herzberg 1980, 110).
- "Je suis absolument écoeuré et démoralisé de cette existence que je mène depuis si longtemps. Quand on en est la à mon âge, il n'y a plus rien à espérer. Malheureux nous sommes, malheureux nous resterons. Chaque jour amène ses peines et chaque jour surgissent des difficultés dont nous ne sortirons jamais. Aussi j'énonce tout à fait à la lutte et à tout espoir d'arriver et je ne me sens plus la force de travailler dans de telles conditions. J'apprends que mes amis font une nouvelle exposition cette année, je dois renoncer d'y prendre part, n'ayant rien fait qui vaille la peine d'être exposé" (Monet to de Bellio, March 10, 1879, transcribed in Wildenstein 1974-91, vol. 1, p. 436, no. 155). On trading a portrait for boots, see Wildenstein 1999, p. 212, no. 542.

- 10. Monet made 12,285 francs in 1879 and about the same in 1880 (see Stuckey and Shaw 1995, 205 and 206).
- 11. "Je travaille à force à trois grandes toiles dont deux seulement pour le Salon, car l'une des trois est trop de mon goût à moi pour l'envoyer et elle serait refusée, et j'ai dû en place faire une chose plus sage, plus bourgeoise. C'est une grosse partie que je vais jouer, sans compter que me voila du coup traite de lâcheur par toute la bande, mais je crois qu'il était de mon intérêt de prendre ce parti étant à peu près sûr de faire certaines affaires, notamment avec Petit, une fois que j'aurai forcé la porte du Salon; mais ce n'est pas par goût que je fais cela, et il est bien malheureux que la presse et le public aient pris si peu au sérieux nos petites expositions bien préférables à ce bazar official" (Monet to Duret, March 8, 1880, transcribed in Wildenstein 1974-91, vol. 1, p. 438, no. 173).
- 12. Monet's landscape was "perdu dans les frises d'une des salles, et qui ne gagnerait peut-être à être vu de plus près, mais dont l'atmosphère lumineuse et claire fait paraitre noirs tous les paysages voisins dans la même galerie" (Chennevières 1880, 44; reproduced in Levine 1976, 41).
- 13. Le Gaulois, January 24, 1880; reprinted in "Les Impressionnistes," L'Artiste, February 1880, 140-41; quoted in Stuckey 1985, 69-70.
- 14. Stuckey 1985, 92; see also Levine 1976, 38.
- 15. Richard R. Brettell, "The 'First' Exhibition of Impressionist Painters," in Moffett et al. 1986, 192.

- 16. In his review of the impressionists' third exhibition in 1879, Zola voiced his regret that all of the painters "péchent par insuffisance technique. . . . Tous ces artistes-là sont trop facilement satisfaits; c'est pourquoi on peut craindre qu'ils ne fassent qu'indiquer le chemin au grand artiste de l'avenir que le monde attend." He went on to single out Monet for criticism. "Un instant ils [the other painters] avaient mis de grandes espérances en Monet; mais celui-ci paraît épuisé par une production hâtive; il se contente d'à peu prés; il n'étudie pas la nature avec la passion des vrais créateurs" (Émile Zola, Le Messager de l'Europe [in Russian], July 1879; translated by Hemmings and Niess as "Nouvelles artistiques et littéraires," in Zola 1959, 226-27). An excerpt including this quotation was translated and published in La Revue politique et litteraire, 2nd series, 24 (July 26, 1879), 96. The quotation also appears in Levine 1976, 34-35.
- 17. "Ainsi nous assistons à ce spectacle étonnant: une poignée d'artistes, persécuté, raillés dans la presse, où l'on n'en parle qu'en se tenant les côtes, se présentent néanmoins comme les véritables inspirateurs du Salon officiel d'où ils sont chassés" (Zola 1879, cited in Hemmings 1958, 413, and reprinted in Zola 1959, 226-30, and Berson 1996, vol. 1, p. 253).
- Monet to Charles Durand-Ruel, July 28, 1885 (Wildenstein 1974-91, vol. 2, p. 261).



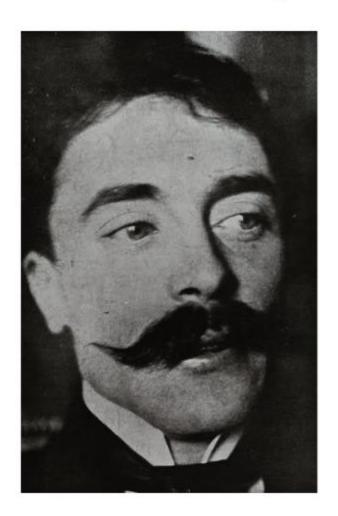
### A More Subtle Mathematics

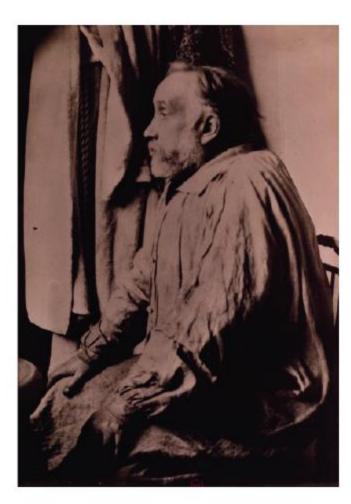
Edgar Degas's Aria after the Ballet and Ballet Dancers on the Stage

RICHARD KENDALL

One of the most startling claims ever made about Edgar Degas appears in the writings of Paul Valéry, the distinguished French thinker and man of letters (fig. 60) who as a youth had befriended the aging artist (fig. 61). "Art for him," Valéry recalled, "was simply a series of problems in a more subtle kind of mathematics than the real one." Valéry himself was fascinated by science and mathematics in his early years and used this surprising analogy with great deliberation; he even added Degas's name to some of his own pages of calculations. While there is otherwise no evidence that Degas engaged with mathematical issues in a conventional sense, Valéry's point cannot be dismissed lightly. It was confidently expressed and based on first-hand observation of the painter and his work around the turn of the nineteenth century, when the younger man was himself ranging fearlessly across the disciplines. The idea that the making of art can be compared to solving "a series of problems" is in itself an unusual one, as is the implication that such problems—like those in mathematics—can be solved by mental effort alone. Since its first appearance

OPPOSITE FIGURE 59 Edgar Degas, Aria after the Ballet, 1879 Detail of figure 64





Paul Valéry, photograph by Pierre Louys, 1893 Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris

FIGURE 61 Self-Portrait in the Studio, photograph by Edgar Degas, c. 1896 Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris in print, Valéry's analysis has remained largely unexplored, yet the sheer originality of his approach deserves consideration in the still-underresearched area of Degas's creative life.

The relevance of these speculations to the Dallas Museum of Art's collection becomes apparent when the context of Paul Valéry's statement is noted. It was published in his 1938 book Degas, Danse, Dessin, a collection of essays concerned with the arts that includes a long series of reflections on Degas's draftsmanship, his preoccupation with the ballet, and other related matters. By fortunate coincidence Dallas has no fewer than three examples of Degas's ballet scenes, each exemplifying a distinct aspect of his representation of dancers on stage, from the self-consciously classical to the startlingly modern. Valéry was intrigued by dance in the broadest sense, as a historical and cultural phenomenon and as a living practice that flourished in his own day. Over the years it prompted him to write prose and poetry, make modest works of art—such as drawings of dancers and a painted study of a theater interior (fig. 62)—and devise an extended, dramatized conversation set in ancient Greece entitled L'Ame et la Danse.3 In his now celebrated Degas, Danse, Dessin, where the link with mathematics was originally made, Valéry addressed his own obsession with the dance in more contemporary terms. Here he also made it clear that his views about Degas were based on privileged information, derived from long conversations that he had enjoyed with the artist in both his Paris studio and apartment. Valéry describes how they talked while surrounded by Degas's pictures and sculptures, notably "a danseuse modeled in wax, with a real gauze tutu, in a glass case." Such experiences even prompted Valéry to try the medium himself, when he made a tiny portrait of Degas from memory (fig. 63). There were also drawings on several easels in Degas's studio that would later prompt many pages of text; "I know of no art which calls for the use of more intelligence than that of drawing," Valéry wrote.5

Paul Valéry, Monsieur Teste at the Theater, n.d. Musée Paul Valéry, Sète, France



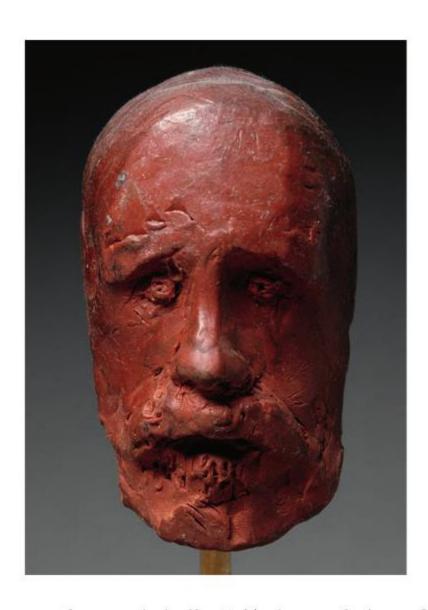
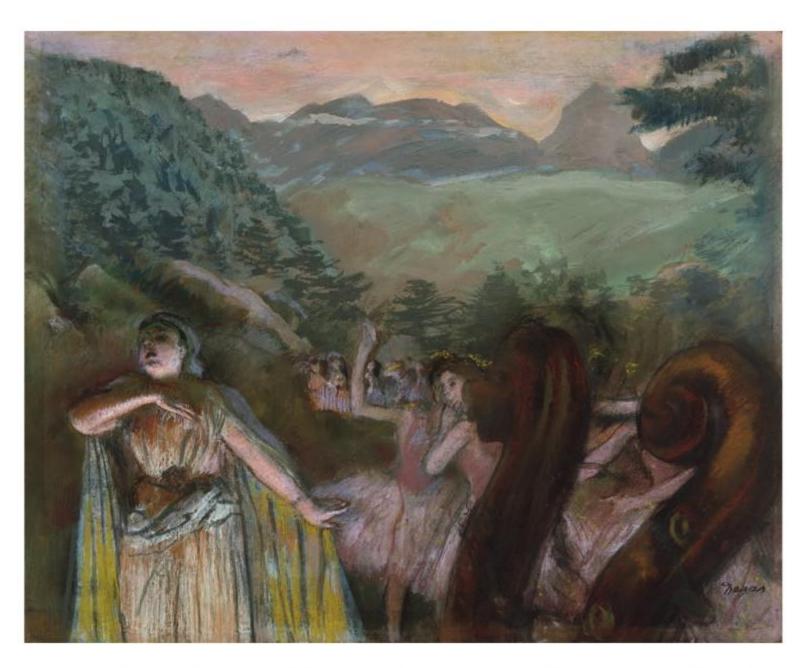


FIGURE 63 Paul Valéry, Edgar Degas, 1910 Musée d'Orsay, Paris

Characteristically, Valéry's speculations often dealt with abstract rather than practical matters, among them the challenge of comprehending the human figure in action. When we dance, he suggested, "our limbs can carry out a set of figures that are all interlinked, and whose repetition brings about a kind of exhilaration, ranging from languor to delirium, from a sort of hypnotic abandonment to a sort of frenzy. In this way the condition of dancing is created." Continuing this line of thought, Valéry seemed to imagine the possibilities that such events presented to an artist: "In ballets there are moments of immobility when the grouping of the whole offers a picture, stilled but not permanent, a complex of human bodies suddenly arrested in their postures, giving a singular emphasis to the impression of flux. The dancers are as if transfixed in poses very remote from those in which the human physique can maintain itself by its own strength."

How do Valéry's personal relationship with Degas, his own experiments with making art, and his musings on the dance shed light on the pictures in Dallas? Unusually for such a group, all three works represent a specific moment in a public performance, in contrast to the vast majority of ballet scenes made by Degas that are typically set in the wings or in the dance classroom. As an intimate of the artist, Valéry would have been well aware of this fact, but it is perhaps significant that—like most admirers of the art form—Valéry's own experience of ballet was necessarily dominated by actions unfolding on stage in the theater itself. It is in such a context that his evocation of "a complex of human bodies suddenly arrested in their postures" in mid-dance was surely articulated. Degas, too, was extremely familiar with scenes of this kind and is known to have been a frequent presence at ballet performances in the Palais Garnier, the home of the Paris Opéra, which he sometimes attended several nights a week. But there is also evidence of other kinds of contact, showing that the artist gained access to various backstage areas at the Opéra and thus



Edgar Degas, Aria after the Ballet, 1879 Dallas Museum of Art

became intimate with more informal aspects of the dancers' world, such as their daily exercise and instruction and the process of rehearsal. Here Degas watched the corps-de-ballet as they trained, and he became personally acquainted with many individual dancers, even making drawings of them at work and at ease in the private spaces of the Opéra. From annotations made on these studies and from his notebooks and letters, the names of numerous performers who feature in his pictures have been identified, while details of scenery and costume enable us to trace some of the productions depicted.9 Degas's ballet scenes have thus achieved an authoritative status as records of the period and are today consulted by historians of the dance and specialists of other kinds. Such information also reminds us that Degas initially characterized himself as a "realist" before he became a central figure in the impressionist group in the mid-1870s. Increasingly seen as a leading representative of the group's values, Degas made pictures of dancers that shocked many of his contemporaries by their unsentimental portrayal of backstage life and the realities of the stage itself, as well as their bold disruptions of pictorial orthodoxy.

The earliest of the three dance works by Degas in the Dallas Museum of Art, Aria after the Ballet (fig. 64), is a case in point. Daringly conceived and executed, it was made in pastel and gouache over a monotype printed on paper, a technique that the artist himself had recently devised. First noted in 1879, probably soon after Degas had completed it, the picture was listed as Grand Air, après un ballet in the catalogue of the fourth impressionist exhibition. Despite its dramatic composition and startling effects of light and shade, however, Aria after the Ballet—as it is known today—was overlooked by the critics and

writers who attended this event, and there is no documentary evidence that it was included in the 1879 exhibition or acquired by a collector at that time." Yet this pastel was surely among Degas's most inventive compositions to date, summarizing many of the technical and conceptual advances he had made in this crucial decade. Most striking of all, perhaps, was the challenge the picture offered to conventional notions of events taking place on a stage, here represented by fragmentary, barely legible human and other forms that obscure much of the foreground. Limbs, bodies, deep shadows, and bright highlights seem to thrust outward and away from the fictive world of art, intruding into the viewer's space and into the palpable reality that we all occupy. Adding to this effect is the concentration of almost all the pictorial action in the lower half of the framed rectangle, as if it is sliding down in response to gravity. Color, too, is at its most intense in this area, where the play of light and shade and the contrast of texture in costumes and scenery add to a rush of vivid, near-incomprehensible sensory data.

It is intriguing to reflect that Valéry himself might have known Aria after the Ballet at first hand, while there is an even greater likelihood that he saw the stage production on which it was based. The picture is said to have been acquired in 1907 by Degas's principal dealer, Paul Durand-Ruel, and remained in the collection of this prominent family in the Paris art world until the 1940s.12 It was also reproduced at least twice during this time: in 1918, in the first biography of Degas, and in 1931, in a well-known French periodical. If he encountered Aria after the Ballet in one of these contexts, Valéry the dance enthusiast may also have recognized some of its distinctive features, among them the precisely depicted stage set. Several scenery elements in this work have been identified in surviving images of a production of Charles Gounod's Faust in Paris, among them an engraving that shows the hero in the Harz Mountains (fig. 65). 4 First presented at the new opera house, the Palais Garnier, in 1875, Faust had already become one of the most popular of all operas and—remarkably—would remain in the repertoire throughout not just Degas's lifetime but also Valéry's. 15 The presence of ballet dancers on stage during such opera performances, though puzzling to modern eyes, would also have been familiar to both men; danced "divertissements" had been inserted into operas for generations.



Jules Férat, engraver
Faust, act IV, scene 3: Faust,
Mephistopheles, and the
vision of Marguerite in the
Harz Mountains, 1869
Bibliothèque nationale de
France, Paris

If he indeed knew Degas's Aria after the Ballet, how might Valéry have explained it as a response to "a series of problems in a more subtle kind of mathematics than the real one"? Valéry never elaborated on this statement in print and there is no evidence that the artist himself revealed thoughts of this kind to him. Even among close friends, Degas was notoriously reluctant to discuss his own approach to making art. Two or three years before completing Aria after the Ballet, he had, however, made some private notes about technical strategies that he was clearly planning to explore. "After having done portraits from above," Degas wrote, "I will do some seen from below"; he then contemplated drawing "a series of arm movements of the dance, or of legs that wouldn't move, turning around them oneself."16 These were radical notions for the 1870s, involving fundamental shifts in the artist's position with respect to traditional practices and even the possibility of the draftsman as a mobile observer. They also seem to provide a glimpse of the thinking that would later intrigue Valéry, suggesting Degas's unusually calculated, reflective approach to art making, and one that might reasonably be compared to that of a scientist or even a mathematician. Some of Degas's private aphorisms about his studio practice again emphasize the element of rational thought that informed his creativity. "No art was ever less spontaneous than mine," he is said to have told the novelist George Moore, while, on another occasion, Degas observed that "a painting is an artificial work existing outside nature, and it requires as much cunning as the perpetration of a crime."18 The emphasis on deliberation and control implicit in both remarks is once more characteristic of Degas's attitude to his art at this period, which has often been contrasted with the supposed spontaneity of his impressionist colleagues. In such a context, Aria after the Ballet can certainly be understood as a precisely and thoughtfully constructed composition, where Degas has chosen to reject many of the conventions that had dominated such imagery in the past and to contrive more radical structures appropriate to his new pictorial ambitions.

Degas's transformation of tradition in the Dallas pastel becomes strikingly evident when it is compared with the theatrical vocabulary that his generation had grown up with. In the engraving of the related scene from Faust (fig. 65), for example, the broad panorama of the stage is observed from a distance and presented as if it were a real—albeit romanticized—landscape. There is no hint that the spectator is in a theater, and the view is that of an individual suspended high above the action. In his own dramatically reconsidered version of this subject, Degas brings us down to earth and much closer to the unfolding spectacle. Choosing to isolate and enlarge just one part of the wide vista, he replaced the heroic episode shown in the engraving with an awkward moment of transition on a crowded stage. At left a woman in a classical toga sings with passion, while at center and right clustered ballerinas in pink tutus gesticulate rather than dance, as they appear to make their exit. This willed confusion is increased by the obliteration of much of the right-hand section of the stage by the enormous, looming heads of two double basses, behind which the performance is barely discernible (fig. 59). Dramatically—even violently-lit from below, the scene as a whole suggests a ghoulish apparition rather than a sedate theatrical experience. Opting for surprise in place of familiarity, for shock and not for reassurance, Degas contrived a thrilling equation for pictorial chaos.

It may not be a coincidence that Degas returned only rarely to the compositional extremes of *Aria after the Ballet*. Given its challenging character, such a work would have attracted only the most courageous and far-sighted of collectors, at a time when many of his contemporaries still struggled with Degas's innovations. Several of the more positive reviews written by critics at the next impressionist exhibition, held in 1880, included praise for Degas's pictures of the ballet and noted their "originality" and the "perfect realism" that he had achieved. But some commentators were still alarmed by the strangeness of these works, with their "shocking eccentricities of composition" and the "disgraceful attitudes" and "dislocated limbs" of some of the dancers. There were also signs of dawning comprehension among the previously unpersuaded; the conservative commentator Paul de Charry conceded that, while the artist's ballet pictures were "disagreeable to the eye at first glance," he soon got used to them, and others sensed that the "extraordinary poses" of certain dancers had merit.

Ballet Dancers on the Stage (fig. 66) seems to have been completed almost a decade later than Aria after the Ballet, after the impressionist collective had disbanded. It is recorded in public only once during these early years, when the picture was shown at the Durand-Ruel gallery in January 1888, probably soon

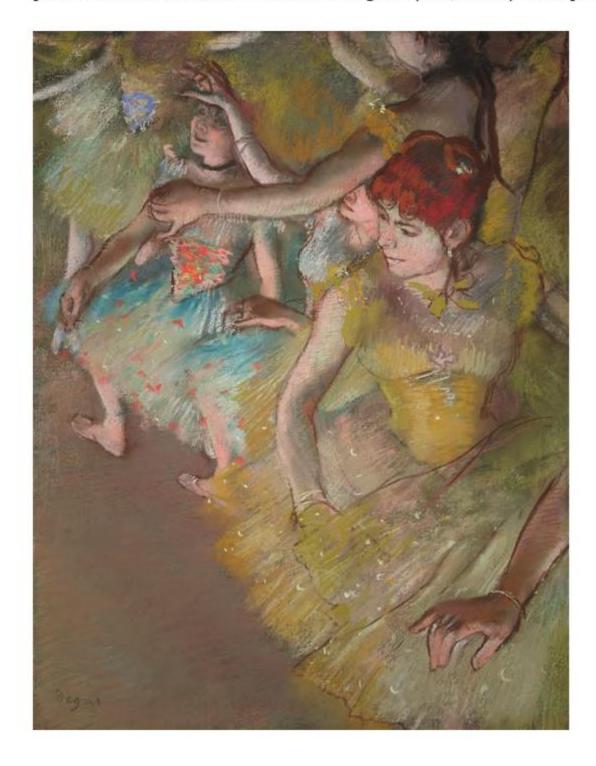


FIGURE 66 Edgar Degas, Ballet Dancers on the Stage, c. 1887–88 Dallas Museum of Art





Melina Darde and Adèle Marchisio, students at the Opéra Ballet School, photograph by E. Flamant, n.d. Bibliothèque-musée de l'Opéra, Paris

Edgar Degas, At the Theater, Woman with a Fan, 1878–80 Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

after it was finished. Its first owner was another brave collector of contemporary art, Georges Viau, a wealthy dentist who acquired substantial numbers of works by most of the leading impressionists, as well as major pictures by Édouard Manet, Paul Gauguin, Vincent van Gogh, and Odilon Redon. Given his forward-looking tastes, it is not hard to understand why this adventurous connoisseur was drawn to the energetic forms and emphatically diagonal composition of Ballet Dancers on the Stage. Félix Fénéon, the critic and champion of avant-garde literature and art, who saw the pastel at Durand-Ruel's in 1888, was also entranced, comparing "this tangle of arms and legs" to an "image of an epileptic . . . god."22 Here Degas's draftsmanship was at its most spectacular, and his brilliant pastel colors added further to what might almost be a celebration of theatrical glamour. Yet, as with Aria after the Ballet, the sensuous impact of Ballet Dancers on the Stage soon gives way to uncertainty about the subject depicted and its relationship to ordinary theatrical experience. What is this group of rainbow-hued dancers actually doing? Where are they situated in relation to the vast Opéra stage and to the rest of the company? And, most puzzling of all, how are we—the viewers of the scene—located in relation to the incident that Degas has described?

A crucial early decision in the making of Ballet Dancers on the Stage concerned Degas's treatment of its source of light. By illuminating his figures from below, he was able to emphasize the bright colors of their stockings and tutus and cast the upper surfaces of limbs and heads in soft shadow, an unconventional scheme that is largely consistent throughout the picture. As with many of the maneuvers adopted in the earlier Aria after the Ballet, this approach was contrary to that of the great majority of popular dance images of the period, which took the form of lithographs, engravings, and the increasingly popular photograph. A print of two dancers posing in a studio (fig. 67) is characteristic of many hundreds of such photographs that survive today, in this case linked directly to Degas by the figure at left—the ballerina Melina Darde—who is known to

have modeled for him. Here Melina and her companion are lit from the front and from above, as if at the center of the Opéra stage, where they habitually performed. By choosing the opposite effect for his pastel, Degas made a decision that was unlikely to endear him to the dancers themselves, to critics who bridled at his "eccentricities of composition," and even to potential purchasers of his work. Light from this direction—evidently coming from the footlights close to the audience—tends to distort physical features, an effect shown in the small masklike face at upper left. It also draws attention to the legs and lower bodies of the ballerinas in ways that were not necessarily graceful or flattering, at least by nineteenth-century standards. Characteristically, Degas seems to have accentuated these distortions, spotlighting the splayed feet of the two dancers in turquoise with their identically angled limbs. Elsewhere in the composition, brilliantly lit legs, elbows, hands, and shoulders seem to vie for our attention and energize the field of view, creating a vivid if fragmentary pattern of diagonals throughout the shallow space.

No orthodox depiction of the dance from this time compares with Ballet Dancers on the Stage in its visual audacity, a point again underlined by the studio photograph of Melina Darde and her colleague. Implicit in the photograph and in many like it is the sense of poise and respect for convention that dominated the comportment of contemporary dancers, both on stage and in front of the camera. Such formality was maintained throughout most of the choreography in danced interludes that took place during operas, such as the sequence performed in Faust. Although the production represented in Ballet Dancers on the Stage has yet to be identified, it is clear that Degas challenged himself to show a less formal and perhaps more compelling view of such theatrical proceedings. As with Aria after the Ballet, among his first calculations must also have been that of a viewpoint that would reveal the artifice of the public display. Here, taking the opposite extreme to the earlier pastel, the artist has reconstructed a view of the stage that is not only seen from above but also at extremely close quarters. The Paris Opéra interior, which survives today, reveals that the implicit viewer of Degas's picture would have been in one of the boxes very near to the stage, which—then as now—are favored by wealthy patrons or those with influence among the Opéra's management; a lithograph made by Degas, At the Theater, Woman with a Fan (fig. 68), shows a young woman watching a group of dancers from just such a vantage point. Equally probable was that Degas envisioned a close-up view of events seen through opera glasses, apparently showing part of a choreographically complex moment during a ballet interlude.

As remarkable in its own way as the perspective in Aria after the Ballet, the bird's-eye view in Ballet Dancers on the Stage allowed Degas to focus on one or two individuals in what are clearly portraits. The handsome redhead at right was surely studied from a dancer known personally to Degas, while the grimacing girl at upper left again suggests a relative youngster, perhaps a contemporary of Marie van Goethem, who had posed for the Little Dancer, Aged Fourteen a few years earlier. Engaging though these personal glimpses are, it is the confrontational, almost violent structure of Ballet Dancers on the Stage that is its most unforgettable feature. Effectively drawing a line from upper left to lower right, Degas has arranged his cast of characters in the triangle above this line and kept much of the remaining picture surface empty. There is no clear precedent for such a composition, just as there are few earlier works by Degas or his contemporaries with so many disembodied limbs and deliberately half-obscured



FIGURE 69 Edgar Degas, Group of Dancers, c. 1894-96 Dallas Museum of Art

faces. It is again conceivable that Valéry knew this picture in reproduction or in the original, and it is tempting to link it with his extraordinary evocation of dance, which results in "moments of immobility when the grouping of the whole offers a picture, stilled but not permanent, a complex of human bodies suddenly arrested in their postures, giving a singular emphasis to the impression of flux. The dancers are as if transfixed in poses very remote from those in which the human physique can maintain itself by its own strength."23

There are few better foils for this extreme conception of the ballet, whether in Valéry's prose or in Ballet Dancers on the Stage, than the third in the trio of dance works in Dallas. Unexpectedly created in pastel on wood, Group of Dancers (fig. 69) was made significantly later than the two pictures already discussed, when Degas chose to explore a vein of nostalgia in his fascination for the ballet as he approached old age. Insisting to his friends that such compositions recalled "the movements of the Greeks," he produced several works that showed ballerinas gracefully posed against a Mediterranean hillside crowned by an Acropolis-like structure.<sup>24</sup> Elegiac and wistful in mood, Group of Dancers and its associated studies also reveal an artist who has moved past his more confrontational urban manner of the impressionist years. Our viewpoint is now horizontal, and the dance itself is neither cropped nor seen from a great height, almost recalling the sedate relationship with the stage in the engraving from Faust. Yet this small picture was made in the early or mid-1890s, around the date that the young Valéry was beginning to frequent Degas's studio and discover some of the more extreme products of his late career. In Degas, Danse, Dessin, Valéry recalled the "long attic room . . . where light and dust mingled gaily" and the "charcoal sketches of flat-nosed, twisted models, with combs in their fists, held around thick hair gripped tight in the other hand" that he saw there. 25 There were also hundreds of unfinished ballet scenes, among them "series" of structurally related works that continued to occupy the artist into the next century. Very different in character from *Group of Dancers*, these extraordinary creations were typically made in pastel on tracing paper and thus allowed Degas to repeat certain scenes while varying his palette and modifying certain forms. There is unquestionably an obsessive quality about these superb inventions, along with a marked emphasis on geometric structure, where boldly emphasized limbs, torsos, and tutus echo one another and rhyme with elements of scenery. Beneath the sensuality of his late colors and textures, evidence of deliberation is everywhere: even in his last phase, it seems, Degas's "subtle kind of mathematics" still formed the basis of his art.

- 1. Valéry 1936/1960, 5.
- See, for example, Valéry 2005, 89.
- Valéry 1921.
- Valéry 1936/1960, 19.
- 5. Ibid., 57.
- 6. Ibid., 15.
- 7. Ibid., 16.
- 8. See Loyrette 1989, 46-64.
- See, for example, DeVonyar and Kendall 2002.
- See Berson 1996, vol. 2, p. 111, no. IV-73.
- 11. In the museum records, the first owner is noted as André Pillot, though the source is not cited. A musician with this name is associated with an earlier picture by Degas in Boggs et al. 1988, 161. Aria after the Ballet was not mentioned by any of the critics at the 1879 exhibition.
- This information is in the Dallas Museum of Art curatorial file.
- See Lafond 1918–19, vol. 2,
   p. 35; and Huyghe 1931, 274.

- 14. DeVonyar and Kendall
  2002, 188–89. This
  engraving is based on
  the production of Faust
  at the rue Le Peletier
  opera house, which was
  destroyed by fire in 1873
  and succeeded by the
  Palais Garnier in 1875. A
  comparable and closely
  similar image of this
  scene in the Palais Garnier
  production is in the
  Bibliothèque-musée de
  l'Opéra, Paris, ref. MAQ 40.
- 15. See Wolff 1962, 84-89.
- See Reff 1985, vol. 1,
   Notebook 30, pp. 29 and
- See also Kendall and DeVonyar 2011, ch. 2.
- 18. Moore 1918, 64.
- 19. Arthur Baignères,
  "Exposition des oeuvres
  de M. J. de Nittis: 5e
  Exposition de peinture,
  par MM. Bracquemond,
  Caillebotte, Degas, etc,"
  La Chronique des arts et de
  la curiosité, April 10, 1880,
  117–18; Jules Claretie, "La
  Vie à Paris: M. de Nittis
  et les impressionnistes,"
  Le Temps, April 6, 1880, 3;
  reprinted in Berson 1996,
  vol. 1, pp. 266 and 273.

- 20. Emile Cardon, "Choses d'art: L'Exposition des impressionnistes," Le Soleil, April 5, 1880, 3; Charles Ephrussi, "Exposition des artistes indépendants," Gazette des Beaux-Arts, May 1, 1880, 485–88; reprinted in Berson 1996, vol. 1, pp. 271 and 278.
- 21. Paul de Charry, "Le Salon de 1880: Préface: Les Impressionnistes," Le Pays, April 10, 1880, 3; Henri Fouquier, "Chronique," Le XIXe siècle, April 10, 1880, 2; reprinted in Berson 1996, vol. 1, pp. 273 and 281.
- 22. Fénéon 1888, 309.
- 23. Valéry 1936/1960, 16.
- For several such claims, see DeVonyar and Kendall 2002, 234–44.
- 25. Valéry 1936/1960, 19.



## Brick by Brick

Paul Cézanne's Abandoned House near Aix-en-Provence

ANDRÉ DOMBROWSKI

The Old Masters had assumed that the members and joints of pictorial design should be as clear as those of architecture.

-Clement Greenberg, "Cézanne," 1951

More directly than any other elements in Paul Cézanne's Provençal landscapes, the bricks, cut stones, and roof tiles of Abandoned House near Aix-en-Provence, dating to about 1885–87 (figs. 70 and 71), express a potential equivalence between the represented object and its pictorial incarnation. By design, one brick is almost equal to one "constructive stroke," and his outlines are not unlike the mortar that binds bricks together. The pile of bricks or stones on the ground to the left of the house, for instance, or the remains of a wall to its right, seem to have offered Cézanne those rare moments in painting when a unit of the world and a unit of his means of representation merge, when one "block" of paint can reach out to the real and become something as concrete and singular as one brick. The collapsed bricks constituted a pictorial motif demonstrating that his coordinated and seemingly coherent strokes (which nonetheless always threaten to dissolve into the merely random) can lay claim to a singular entity of the world of matter and experience—whether a sensation or a brick—as their point of origin. But because a brick has an actual physical shape and particularity that matter and experience lack, it becomes a special metaphor for Cézanne's painting, and one, I hold, that he very much intended. What material, after all, could be closer to paint than clay, especially in Cézanne's region, where the local ground was literally made over into paint? Wrested from the earth, liquefied as paint or, in its hardened, transubstantiated form, made into bricks, this clay embodies more broadly Cézanne's interest in the indivisibility of culture and nature.

There are many designations for Cézanne's signature technique of applying more or less discrete units of paint in several small, somewhat parallel strokes: "dab, touch, comma, wedge, pellet, blot, lozenge, cell, particle, pellicule, atom, atomic unit, molecule, corpuscle"—the list is from Kathryn Tuma's evocative analysis of the meanings of the atom for Cézanne's late brushwork.² But perhaps the most persistent have architectural reverberations: the "constructive stroke" especially, even though Theodore Reff hardly explored the

OPPOSITE
FIGURE 70
Paul Cézanne,
Abandoned House near
Aix-en-Provence, 1885–87
Detail of figure 71



FIGURE 71 Paul Cézanne, Abandoned House near Aix-en-Provence, 1885-87 Dallas Museum of Art

architectonic resonance of his enduring terminology.3 That Cézanne built up his compositions stroke by stroke, that he managed to achieve the illusion of volume through a structural assembly of flattened pictorial units, is perhaps another commonplace of the critical literature that is rarely perceived as metaphor: "You can really see what's happening: Pissarro's embroidery, Cézanne's brick-and-mortar," exclaimed Holland Cotter. Alichard R. Brettell, in his usual prescient manner, makes a similar point: "Cézanne used brushwork called the 'constructive stroke' to build his composition; these vertical and diagonal strokes were applied in groups, as if they were pictorial 'bricks.' In this way, both the subject of the painting and its pictorial language relate to architecture." The quotation marks Brettell places around the word bricks are indicative, manifesting his slight unease about the literalness and prosaic nature of the metaphoric equation he seeks to establish.

If the atom offered Cézanne the figure of the invisible and unknowable structure of matter and the real (as posited in Tuma's convincing study: "The great and tragic paradox of the figure of the atom, as allegory of material endurance and support, is that it gives itself to us only in the immediacy of nature's evanescent, impermanent, temporally dissolving forms"),6 then the brick stands perhaps as the atom's countermetaphor. As metaphor, bricks certify—just as the atom once put the nature of reality and painting the visible into doubt—the ways in which construction and architecture pretend to control the chaos of matter, to harness the formless into that structure we call culture. For all the "uncontainability and irrepresentability of sensation" that Cézanne's brushstrokes embody (these again are Tuma's evocative words), for all the ways in which his strokes "begin with an assuredness, but then . . . drift toward the bottom, repeating themselves like a manual stutter," there are also those few instances in his work in which the material thing and its condensed rendition in paint seem to share a confident and didactic unity.

To be sure, Cézanne's whole system or formula (if that is what indeed he can be said to have developed) does not rest on those exceptional moments in which signifier and signified fuse. Nor does the emphasis on such equivalences in Cézanne's prophetic work bolster an account of assured paint application as so many modernists would claim. Clement Greenberg, for instance, spoke of Cézanne's strokes as having an "abiding, unequivocal character as a mark made by a brush." I propose, instead, to underline the variety of metaphors Cézanne's technique itself can be said to contain besides references to the properties of the canvas, the motif, or the sensory effects of the represented world. In fact, Abandoned House near Aix-en-Provence should be considered a special exercise within Cézanne's landscape practice in which he allowed his constructive strokes an expressly obvious relation to the historical technologies of the construction they represent. Drawing a parallel to contemporary debates in architectural theory about the universal laws and meanings of form depending on material and method, he could advance his own early formalist means of representation. A decrepit house—beside referencing abandonment and death and gradually disappearing back into its landscape—could then also carry more positive associations and pictorial opportunities, not least in revealing the building's basic structural units, such as bricks and stones, disassembled and deconstructed, as if by history itself.

There are several distinct ways in which bricks, stones, and tiles figure in a painting such as Abandoned House near Aix-en-Provence. For instance, the two distinct bricks resting at the front of the pile on the left are each composed of several terracotta-colored strokes, made in various directions; they have a dark red side, and a bit of green seeps into them from below and from above (fig. 72). Traditionally modeled, they seem fully formed as two solid blocks nesting side by side, an illusion possible only through a variety of small yet distinct touches and shadings of the brush. Elsewhere, terracotta-colored paint refuses to coalesce into form: see the far end of the same pile of bricks and stones, once our eyes have moved slightly to the left, or the large heap of





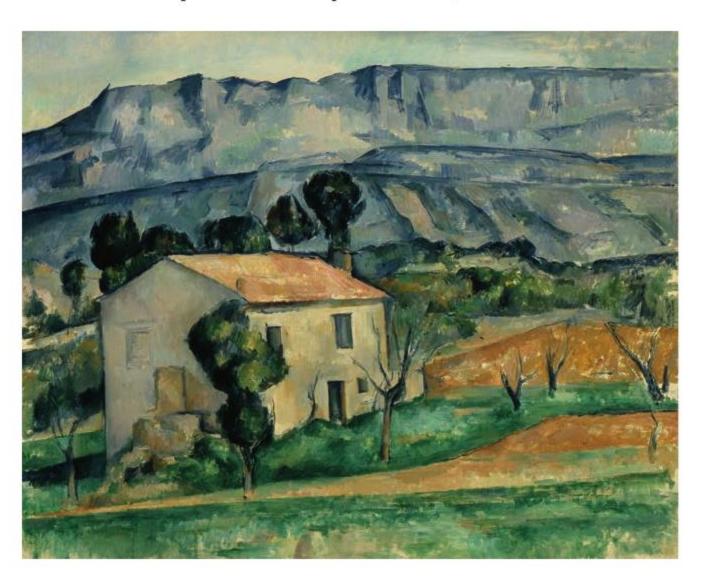
Paul Cézanne, Abandoned House near Aix-en-Provence, 1885–87 Details of figure 71

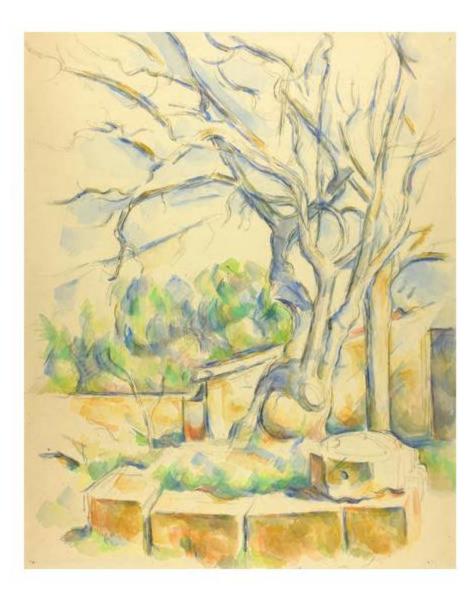
terracotta color that sits in the middle ground of the painting just below the partial wall to the left of the door, where no distinct bricks can be discerned (fig. 70). Whole rows of vertical brushstrokes in lighter and darker shades describe this area—a mass, an obstacle—but not the specific elements from which it is assembled. Here, the dark and vivid greens and blues that surround this pile of stones and earth make it appear more as a void than a presence.

Included within this diversity of pictorial treatments for bricks and stones, at the center of the pile on the left side of the house (fig. 72), we find, too, an area where brick and brushstroke appear almost united, the integrity of a pictorial unit (as representing one brick) only minimally tinkered with. Cézanne turned this pile into a showcase for three different modes of his pictorial illusionism, enforcing the brick's metaphoric richness: an indistinguishable mass of bricks; some more-traditionally modeled, three-dimensional bricks; and his unified "bricks-as-strokes." This pile of bricks or stones is a crucial focal point, especially because it is also one of the brightest areas of the entire painting and thus draws the viewer's attention. Still, the exercise reaches out from here into the rest of the canvas: the constructive strokes that make up one brick can be found elsewhere in the image, on the roof and on the remains of the wall at the opposite side of the house, where each side of a roof tile or brick appears to have been made with more or less a single stroke (fig. 73).

We would be hard pressed to find other instances in Cézanne's oeuvre in which signifier and signified are as proximate as the brick and the constructive stroke are here. For this equivalence to function in Cézanne's painting, establishing the correct separation between painter (or viewer) and the pictorial motif is everything: the bricks had to be at a fairly precise distance from the painter. Other depictions of old, abandoned structures in







Paul Cézanne, Pistachio Tree at Château Noir, 1900 Art Institute of Chicago

the Provençal landscape that Cézanne had painted between the late 1870s and the early 1890s do not share this vantage point. In most of the other canvases of this type — House in Provence (fig. 74), The Pigeon Tower at Bellevue (1890, Cleveland Museum of Art), 10 The House with the Cracked Walls (1892–94, New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art)," or his Houses in Provence—The Riaux Valley near L'Estaque (c. 1883, Washington, National Gallery of Art)12 — the houses stretch farther away from the putative observer, and thus their stones or bricks become units of the world (such as leaves or pine needles) that are too small and distant for his brush to attend to individually. The few exceptions include The Abandoned House (c. 1878–79, private collection)<sup>13</sup> and the watercolors he executed of a pistachio tree in the courtyard of the Château Noir (fig. 75),14 in which walls made of fairly large stone boulders occupy the foreground. In both instances, however, the stones are so close to the painter that their size demands that they be built up sedimentally through a multitude of strokes. Abandoned House near Aix-en-Provence is thus a landscape in which the building has more prominence than usual, squatting in the center of the image and allowing for little else within the canvas, except a bit of sky above and a few bushes to the right and left. We even seem to be heading straight for the door at the center of the painting, although this route is blocked by small mounds and disintegrating walls. In Abandoned House near Aix-en-Provence, that is, the painter gives the encounter between world and paint a special phenomenological correspondence, providing a more evocative site of identification and habitation than he does in other landscapes of this type.

Bricks were certainly ubiquitous in Cézanne's Provence, both as reality and as metaphor, and they played a special role in traditional Provençal architecture as well as in the region's industry. The South of France, long a Roman stronghold, had a more sustained tradition of brick usage for building than most other regions of France. Eugène Viollet-le-Duc, in his influential Dictionnaire raisonné de l'architecture



FIGURE 76 Adolph Menzel, Backyard of the Puhlmann House near Potsdam, 1844 Kupferstichkabinett, Hamburger Kunsthalle, Hamburg

*française*, pointed to the unusual preference for brick over stone: "This part of the Languedoc [Toulouse] was more or less the only region of France where stone is almost completely absent, and the architects of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries chose unreservedly to erect their buildings in brick, not using stone except for window transoms, columns, and some isolated points of support. . . . "15 For Cézanne, the meanings of the brick as a pictorial metaphor were thus geographically and culturally coded, in line with his other archaeologies of the histories and traditions of "his" land, Provence. This was also true for Antony Valabrègue who describes, in the poem "Le Pigeonnier," the local pigeon towers, which Cézanne also painted, as emblems of the region's vernacular architecture: "In the shadow of the old chestnut tree / That envelops the courtyard of the castle / The farmhouse raises its pigeon tower / Made out of painted brick." Moreover, Nina Athanassoglou-Kallmyer has noted that the most prominent industries in L'Estaque, near Marseille, were brick and tile factories, which grew dramatically in scale during the latter part of the nineteenth century." The factory chimneys that are so distinct in Cézanne's views of the Bay of L'Estaque are thus emblematic of the region's production of construction materials.

Another painter of Cézanne's day, Adolph Menzel, self-consciously deployed the bricklayer and bricklaying as metaphors for his own realist endeavors. According to Michael Fried, Menzel "imagines the painting itself . . . as a construction site, perpetually open to revision,"18 a conceit evident in several of his paintings, drawings, and prints that focus expressly on bricks and roof tiles:

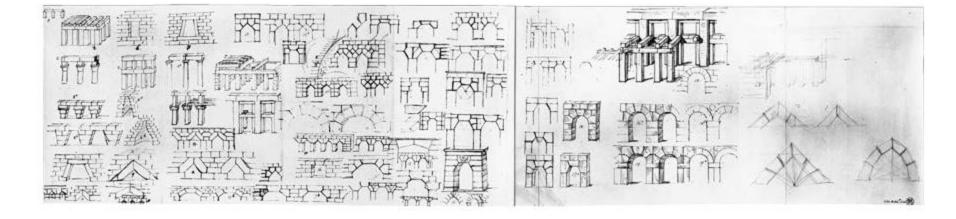
The emphasis of the drawing [Backyard of the Puhlmann House near Potsdam, fig. 76] falls on the rows of shingles rather than on the brickwork, but in both what is striking is not simply the regularity and repetitiveness of the depicted elements but also the suggestion, which becomes more distinct the longer we look, of the "originals" of those elements (and those rows of elements) having been laid down one after another over a period of time; indeed we become aware of the depicted shingles on the roofs nearest us having been drawn one after another, which further identifies the operations in question with the act of drawing itself.19

Menzel's example demonstrates that, by the time Cézanne's constructive stroke emerged, the brick had already served as a principal metaphor for artistic process, that a "picture," in a realist and impressionist conception, would be assembled unit after unit (and those units distinguishable from the next, yet interwoven into the flat whole of the canvas). The metaphor was therefore ready to be adopted by Cézanne, whose paintings, like Menzel's drawings, seek to demonstrate the links between their facture's temporal duration and the making of a brick wall, which consists, after all, of bricks laid down one after the other, row after row, almost marking the time of their production in, and as, their very structure.

To be sure, Cézanne did not embrace the metaphor as wholeheartedly as, perhaps, did Menzel. There are no bricklayers at work in Cézanne's oeuvre as there are sometimes in Menzel's. Instead, in Abandoned House near Aix-en-Provence, we see an old house decomposing, brick walls disintegrating. The brick emerges once more out of its prior context within a building as the single concrete unit of which it was made. But its reemergence is attended by a sense of loss, decomposition, and collapse, marking the inherent limit, even inadequacy, of the brick as metaphor for the brushstroke. In a painting such as Abandoned House near Aix-en-Provence, we might see that "Cézanne was prepared for a too easy analogization of the stroke with" a brick.<sup>20</sup>

The brick, however, also served Cézanne as an indicator of his art-asarchitecture, one that privileges form as an effect of its literal materiality. Cézanne's paintings, more than the works of any other painter of his day, have often been taken as evincing the modernist impulse to strip bare the material support of their visual illusions. Perhaps it is time to acknowledge that that modernist impulse took hold in the nineteenth century first and most prominently in architectural theory and practice, with attempts to understand architectonics through material construction. Cézanne could indeed reach back deeply into his century's conceptions and principles of architectural construction. For example, Karl Friedrich Schinkel's experiments in revealing architecture's own aesthetic language—a visual vocabulary drawn from its material history—made bricks the crucial, if not the primary unit and generative principle of a building. In his famous Langes Blatt (or Long Sheet), which shows designs for masonry of various wall openings and was intended for a projected but never finished textbook on architecture that dates to the early 1820s (fig. 77), Schinkel laid bare the myriad ways that the choice of brick and cut stone not only affects a building's stability but also reveals, if the materials are left exposed, the very processes of construction itself. Schinkel devised a visual grammar of brick masonry that reduces "the diverse history of

FIGURE 77 Karl Friedrich Schinkel, Long Sheet, c. 1823 Kupferstichkabinett, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin

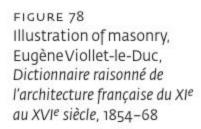


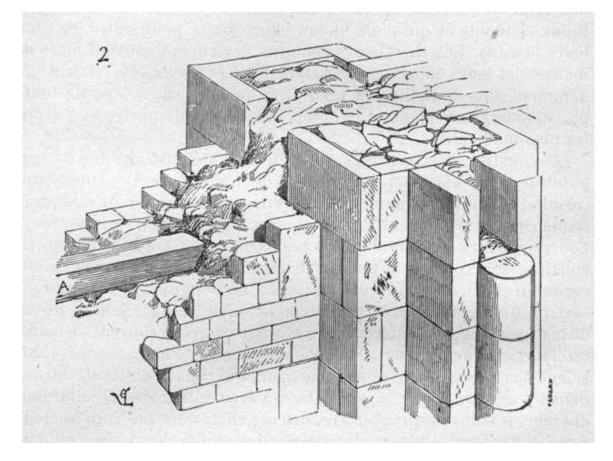
architectural form to a set of fundamental structural morphemes linked into sequences of progressive complexity," and he was among the first to develop a conventionalized language of architecture that was drawn from its means of construction, thus providing the utilitarian aspect of architecture its own aesthetic validation. <sup>22</sup>

Schinkel's theories were later developed and popularized by Gottfried Semper, who also emphasized a truthfulness to materials, an honest expression of a building's structural principles, and above all the dependence of architectural form and typology on social practices. Especially in the second volume of his influential <code>Style</code> (1863), Semper insisted on the legibility of architecture as a function of social customs and techniques of construction, which, for him, were premised on craft—all modern forms of architecture emerging from the earliest principles of carpentry (<code>Tektonik</code>) and masonry (<code>Stereotomie</code>), as well as from ceramics and textile making. <sup>23</sup> Even though Semper's theories were popular in France, it is most likely that Cézanne first encountered the centrality of bricks (and more broadly the idea of material expressivity) as a functional aesthetics of architecture in the writings of Viollet-le-Duc:

Construction, for the architect, means the use of materials with regard to their inherent qualities and proper nature, with the preconceived idea to satisfy a need through the simplest and most solid means; to give to the built structure the appearance of durability and suitable proportions subject to certain rules imposed by common sense, reason, and human instinct. The methods of the builder must indeed vary in accordance with the nature of the materials, the means at his disposal, the requirements he has to satisfy, and the society in whose midst he is born.<sup>24</sup>

For Viollet-le-Duc—I can give here only the most cursory summation of his thought—the history of structural systems in all their particularity could be derived from a study of the increasingly effective use of materials and an





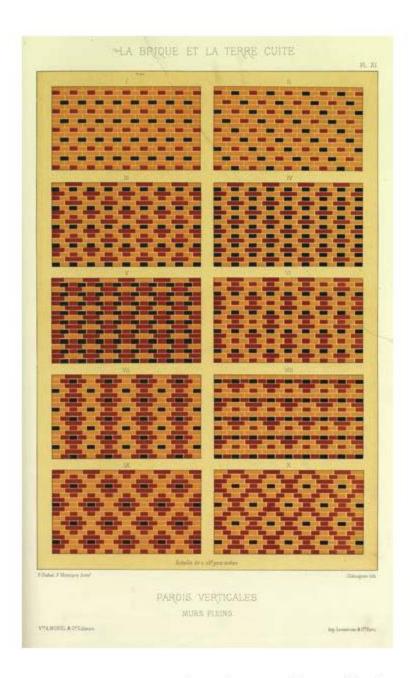


FIGURE 79 Patterns for solid brick walls, Pierre Chabat, La Brique et la terre cuite . . . , 1881

ever more reasoned understanding of balanced forces. Ascribing a progressively more rational and functional value to all parts of a building, so that "each form arises as a logical solution to a structural problem," with the result that "good form is always the succinct expression of function,"25 he included several illustrations of brick and stone masonry that showed the intricate fusion of construction and design throughout history (fig. 78). Cézanne might have learned from them that the flatness of a wall (or a canvas) can acquire "style"—and be made meaningful—precisely as a function of the units that compose it, what Hubert Damisch called Viollet's "modern structuralism."26

In the decade during which Abandoned House near Aix-en-Provence was painted, the most spectacular treatment of the brick may, perhaps, be seen in the lavishly illustrated set of portfolios La Brique et la terre cuite by the architect Pierre Chabat, first published in 1881.27 Most of the plates show various types of brick buildings, including restaurants, hospitals, and some structures from the world's fairs in Paris, but they start with a set of details and motifs of brick patterns for walls and floors (fig. 79). The nineteenth-century use of colored brick was unprecedented in its variety, perhaps unsurpassed since, but the real importance of the plates for our purposes lies in their demonstration of a simple system of laying down equal units—one after the other, one next to the other—that is at once endlessly variable and capable of an infinite array of new visual effects. I am not proposing that Cézanne understood his "constructive strokes" literally as bricks or his canvas as a brick wall, but that the brick—as well as the relation between structure and aesthetic celebrated by late nineteenth-century architecture—is a potent model for precisely what his



Paul Cézanne, The Basket of Apples, c. 1893 Art Institute of Chicago

signature technique sought to achieve. At once singular and multiple, always one in an assemblage of many, bricks had the capacity to lend Cézanne's brushstrokes, sometimes quite literally, sometimes more metaphorically, a stability and durability that was his answer to impressionism.

In the early 1890s, toward the end of his preoccupation with abandoned houses in the Provençal landscape, Cézanne embarked on The Basket of Apples, an ambitious still life of apples and a bottle (fig. 80).28 As far removed from the realms of architecture and landscape as the still life at first appears, bricks are centrally placed within it. One props up the basket itself to the left, providing it with its odd angle. Cézanne chose to leave this functional device visible, and the brick sticks out in its squared-off simplicity within a painting filled with round shapes and crumpled folds. And there are other bricks in the painting: the tabletop itself seems to be standing on two piles of them, as the blocky shapes in the lower left and right indicate. Cézanne even placed one of his rare signatures precisely on this brick shape to the left. There is, furthermore, the famous stack of ladyfingers, which have been laid like bricks in four rows of two. Cézanne's anxious treatment of the borders of things—and the outlines of his apples perhaps especially—are here not unlike mortar, which simultaneously binds things together and keeps them separate. The result of these choices is a canvas structured by a simple architectonic order. It evinces an emphatic belief in construction as painting and painting as a constructed language. The brick is essential to the illusion that is Cézanne's art: it serves both as an element in painting and a metaphor of painting, a realization that Abandoned House near Aix-en-Provence helped prepare.

- I would like to thank Heather MacDonald, Richard R. Brettell, and Eric Zeidler for the invitation to participate in this volume and for their expert editorial guidance, and Frances Bowles, David Brownlee, and especially Jonathan D. Katz for the several iterations of this essay they helped sharpen.
- I use brick as the central metaphor throughout the essay, encompassing other base units of construction such as cut stone or tile. Given how similarly Cézanne represented them, it is often rather difficult to discern the difference between stone and brick unless we know the specific house he chose to paint. On the history and culture of bricks, see Campbell 2003 and Guiheux 1985. For a widely read late nineteenthcentury history of brick masonry, see Davis 1884.
- 2. Tuma 2002, 62. On Cézanne's brushstrokes as metaphor, see also Clark 2001, 93-113.
- Reff 1962, 214-27.
- 4. Holland Cotter, "The Innovative Odd Couple of Cézanne and Pissarro," New York Times, June 24, 2005.
- Brettell 1995, 91.
- Tuma 2002, 78.
- Ibid., 62–63.
- 8. Greenberg 1951/1961, 55.
- See Rewald, Feilchenfeldt, and Warman 1996, no. 573: Maison devant la Sainte-Victoire, près de Gardanne.
- 10. Ibid., no. 692: Pigeonnier de Bellevue.

- 11. Ibid., no. 760: La Maison lézardée.
- 12. Ibid., no. 438: Maisons en Provence—La Vallée de Riaux près de L'Estaque.
- 13. Ibid., no. 351: La Maison abandonnée.
- 14. On the series of watercolors showing this motif, see Conisbee 2006, 214-15.
- 15. "Cette partie du Languedoc [Toulouse] étant à peu près la seule contrée de la France où la pierre fasse complètement défaut, les architectes du XIIIe et XIVe siècles prirent franchement le parti d'élever leurs édifices en briques, n'employant la pierre que pour les meneaux des fenêtres, les colonnes, et quelques points d'appui isolés...." (Viollet-le-Duc 1854-68, vol. 2, p. 250).
- 16. "A l'ombre du vieux marronnier / Qui du château couvre l'enceinte, / La ferme dresse un pigeonnier / De brique peinte" (Antony Valabrèque, "Le Pigeonnier," in Petits poèmes parisiens [Paris: Alphonse Lemerre, 1880], 95; cited in Athanassoglou-Kallmyer 2003, 131).
- 17. Athanassoglou-Kallmyer 2003, 108-109; see also Serrano 2006, 122-36, and Dombrowski 2006, 21-26.
- 18. Fried 2002, 154; see pp. 259-65 for further discussion of this point. I thank Jeremy Melius for the reference.
- 19. Ibid., 156-57.
- 20. Tuma 2002, 70.
- 21. Bergdoll 2000, 192; see also Bergdoll 1994, 180-86 and 193-95.

- 22. On Schinkel's textbook and theories, see Haus 2001, 344-47.
- 23. Semper 1863.
- 24. "Construire, pour l'architecte, c'est employer les matériaux, en raison de leurs qualités et de leur nature propre, avec l'idée préconçue de satisfaire à un besoin par les moyens les plus simples et les plus solides; de donner à la chose construite l'apparence de la durée, des proportions convenables soumises à certaines règles imposées par les sens, la raisonnement et l'instinct humains. Les méthodes du constructeur doivent donc varier en raison de la nature des matériaux, des moyens dont il dispose, des besoins auxquels il doit satisfaire et de la civilisation au milieu de laquelle il naît" (Violletle-Duc 1854-68, vol. 4, p. 1). On Semper's and Viollet-le-Duc's theories of construction, the dissertation by Charles Davis is especially helpful; see Davis 2009.
- 25. Mallgrave 2005, 126, 130.
- 26. Damisch 1978, 19.
- 27. Chabat 1881, which has been partially reprinted as Chabat 1989; see also Chabat 1875-78.
- 28. See Rewald, Feilchenfeldt, and Warman 1996, no. 800: La Corbeille des pommes.



# The Harmony of Labor

Camille Pissarro's Apple Harvest

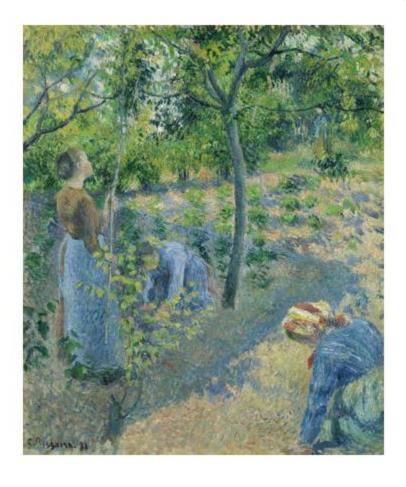
STEPHEN F. EISENMAN

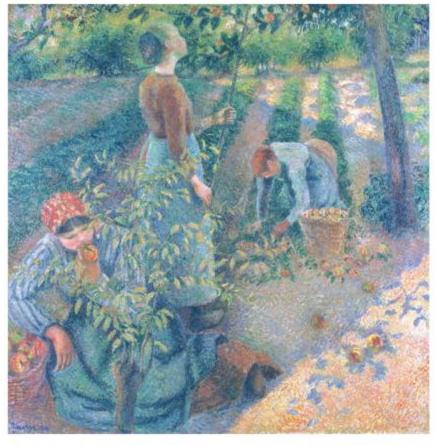
Apple Harvest (figs. 81 and 84) is the last and most resolved of the three major paintings of the subject produced by Camille Pissarro. The first and smallest, Apple Picking (fig. 82), dates from 1881 and is thoroughly impressionist; it is a symphony of blues and greens, constructed with irregularly shaped loops, daubs, flecks, and dashes of color. Its three female figures are large but so enmeshed in the landscape that they appear camouflaged. The second, and largest of the three pictures, is also titled Apple Picking (fig. 83) and occupied the artist for almost five years. Exhibited, along with Georges Seurat's Sunday Afternoon on the Island of the Grande Jatte (1884–86, Art Institute of Chicago) and Paul Signac's Milliners (1885, Zurich, Bührle Foundation), it was intended to be a manifesto of neo-impressionism. As such, it is slightly pedantic. The three women—the two at the top assume exactly the same postures as the two at the left in the 1881 picture—are neither fully at work nor fully at rest, and although in close proximity, they are completely disengaged from each other. The picture is made up of divided or complementary colors in juxtaposition, but its surface and painterly touch lack the regularity and clarity of the entries by Seurat and Signac. The third painting, the Apple Harvest in Dallas, is slightly bigger than the 1881 version and half the size of the 1886 picture. It is the only one of the

OPPOSITE
FIGURE 81
Camille Pissarro, Apple
Harvest, 1888
Detail of figure 84

Camille Pissarro, Apple Picking, 1881 Private collection, Europe

FIGURE 83 Camille Pissarro, Apple Picking, 1886 Ohara Museum of Art, Kurashiki, Japan





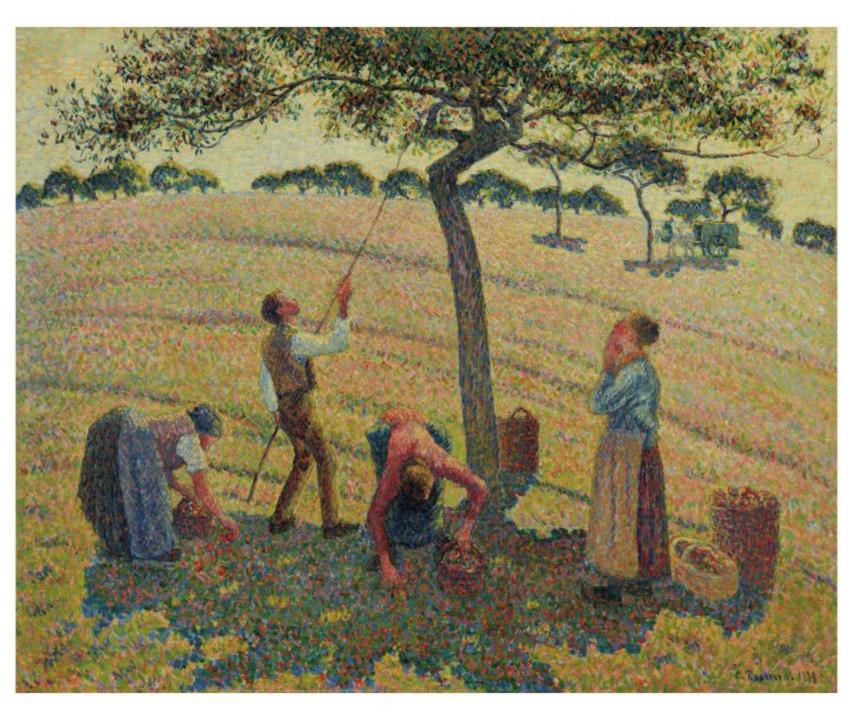


FIGURE 84 Camille Pissarro, Apple Harvest, 1888 Dallas Museum of Art

three to have a horizontal format; this is important because it literally places labor upon a wide geographical stage. For the anarchist Pissarro, as for Seurat and Signac, the class struggle between proletarian and capitalist—spurred by the exploitation of labor—was the defining contest of the age.

Apple Harvest represents two women bending over to pick up apples that have been knocked to the ground by a man in the center wielding a long pole. A peasant woman standing at right touches her chin with her left hand as she gazes at the work being done above her. In the background at right, a draft horse and wagon idle in the meager shade cast by another apple tree. (It is a warm fall day in Normandy.) In the distance, a row of apple trees ornaments the curving horizon. Is the terrain actually shaped that way, or has Pissarro imposed the curvature, as if to suggest the shape of the earth itself?

The painting reveals many such deviations from naturalism. The apple tree is shaped like a capital letter I—with the canopy above and shadow below functioning as crossbars and the trunk as the main body or stem of the letter. All four figures are contained within the shadow cast by the tree, which spreads like a stain toward the bottom edge of the picture. (It must be within an hour or two of high noon.) The furrows in the field behind the tree—like concentric parentheses—simultaneously bind the parts of the picture together and suggest lines of force, such as those that would soon appear in Italian Futurist pictures by Giacomo Balla. Pissarro had a thing about furrows. They were the ostensible subject of *Hoar Frost* (1873, Paris, Musée d'Orsay), which was shown at the first impressionist exhibition in 1874 and roundly mocked by conservative critics for its near indecipherability. In combination with the

broken surface—composed of particles or atoms of color in random or Brownian motion (described in nineteenth-century particle theory)—the curvature of the horizon and the concentric arcs in *Apple Harvest* produce an energy and dynamism that belies the stasis of its figures, which seem frozen in place.

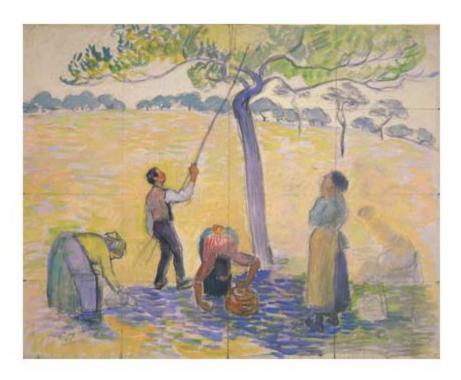
#### THE MUSIC OF THE DOTS

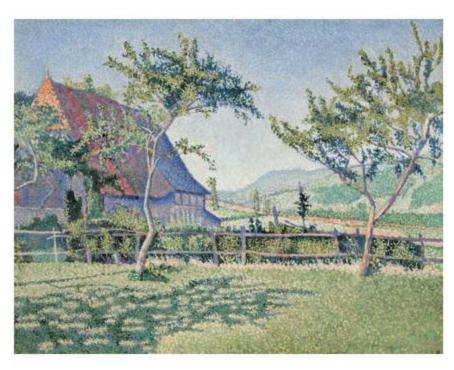
The highest degree of abstraction in the painting is registered not at the level of the composition but at that of the mark, or rather, of the particle or dot. Pissarro's picture is made of thousands of them. They comprise figures, trees, land, shadows, and apples. The two women reach down to gather them by the handful and put them in baskets, while the man knocks them down to the ground. But wherever they are—on the tree, on the ground, or in the basket—they remain what they are, dots. Starting in 1886, Pissarro, along with Seurat and Signac, began applying color in these small daubs or dots instead of in the curving, looping, or lozenge-shaped brushstrokes that had been his previous habit. Described this way, the change seems trivial, but combined with his application of the theory of simultaneous contrast of color—derived from the writings of the French chemist Eugène Chevreul and the American physicist Ogden Rood—the transformation was profound. For perhaps the first time in the history of art, the artist's expressive marks were intended to convey meaning independent of their representational function.

Like chromaticism in music, in which the predominant diatonic scale (exemplified by the white keys of a piano) is ornamented with pitches and chords that belong to the chromatic scale (the sequence of half steps from white to black keys), neo-impressionism consists of a pictorial substrate overlaid with pairings and sequences of complementary colored dots. The drawn sketch for the painting (fig. 85) contains written indications of the self-consciousness of these pairings, with red and green predominating. Though the rise of chromaticism in music and greater abstraction in art are historically coincident, the parallel is inexact. The dots in neo-impressionist works cannot be considered half steps like the chromatic scale in music; color has no similar mathematical sequencing. But compared with the coloristic and tonal fluidity of Salon art or even impressionism, paintings by Seurat, Signac, and Pissarro appear fragmented into thousands of tiny atoms of color. The viewer's attention is diverted from the underlying armature of the work—its organization

FIGURE 85 Camille Pissarro, The Apple Harvest, c. 1888 Location unknown

FIGURE 86
Paul Signac,
Comblat-le-Château,
the Meadow, Opus 161,
June–July 1887
Dallas Museum of Art





of landscape, people, animals, and things into a narrative—to the picture's surface: its confetti-like array of dots organized according to the law of mutually exalting complements, red and green, blue and orange, and violet and yellow.

Thus the neo-impressionists, more than earlier artists, worked in two registers at once: composition and chromatics. And, although it is true that the distinction between drawing (disegno) and color (colore) had been a staple of artistic discussion and debate for more than two hundred years, the relative autonomy of the latter had probably never been as boldly asserted, almost to the point where color was understood to comprise its own meaning, independent of the subject portrayed. Within a generation, the claim would be made that color alone—bound within geometric or curvilinear ligaments—could by itself stimulate feelings of pleasure, harmony, and rest, or their opposites (the names Wassily Kandinsky and Piet Mondrian come first to mind). From optical pleasure, the step to social pleasure and political peace was thought to be a short one.

But for Pissarro and the other neo-impressionists, subject and narrative still counted. Signac, for example, carefully selected his subjects either to reveal the degradations wrought by capitalist modernity or to summon the image of an ideal, postrevolutionary, anarchist future for which we all should strive. His painting Comblat-le-Château, the Meadow, Opus 161 (fig. 86), for example, one of five made of this hamlet in the Auvergne, is of the second type. Writing to Pissarro, he described Comblat as "a fairy-tale valley enclosed between splendid mountains," and the result was indeed magical: a farmhouse in the middle ground with steeply pitched roof composed of pink, orange, red, blue, and green dots; fruit trees and their stylized shadows in the foreground; and a ridge of misty mountains in the background. And though the local building style in this part of the Auvergne is a neo-impressionist dream come true—farmhouse walls are a medley of round stones set in mortar—Signac soon moved farther south. He would paint his pastoral utopia on the Côte d'Azur. Pissarro chose his subjects with equal care but remained in the north of France—in Paris and the village of Éragny-sur-Epte in Normandy. Rather than pure landscapes, he preferred to paint peasants and depicted them both at rest and at work.

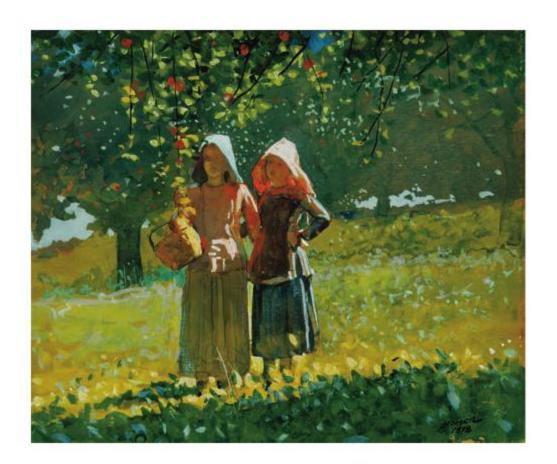
### APPLE PICKING NOW AND THEN

Fruit and vegetable picking is hard work. Apples, cherries, strawberries, lettuce, and broccoli are harvested by hand, requiring field-workers to spend many hours on their knees, stooping over or reaching up. In the United States and most European countries, migrant laborers do the seasonal harvesting: peas in the spring, cauliflower in the summer, and apples in the fall. Migrant workers in the United States come mainly from Mexico and Central America; in France, Spain, Germany, and Italy, they come from Eastern Europe and Africa. Many laborers receive poor wages, live in veritable shantytowns, and work under dangerous conditions. In Texas for example, there are about one hundred and thirty-five thousand migrant farmworkers, but only thirty-one licensed housing facilities for them, and these can accommodate just six thousand people; most of the rest live in substandard housing.2 A study of migrant workers in Starr County in southern Texas indicates the wide variety of injuries to which they are subject, especially concussions, strains, abrasions, contusions, cuts, and rashes.3 This has been the lot of migrant and other farm workers in Texas, the rest of the United States, and elsewhere for a long time.

The goal of the agricultural capitalists who employ these workers is to maximize profits. To that end, various forms of technology—from simple hand tools to industrial combines—are used to increase labor productivity and decrease costs. Until it was banned in 1975, the short-handled hoe, el cortito, was used in California to thin fields of lettuce, sugar beet, strawberries, and other crops. It was also used because an overseer could quickly scan a field of laborers at work; anyone standing upright was clearly not working. But because the hoe caused so many back and other injuries, it became, in the 1960s and 1970s, the symbol of the migrant farmworkers' rights movement in the United States, which was led by César Chávez and Dolores Huerta. (Short-handled hoes continue to be used in sub-Saharan Africa and elsewhere.)4 In recent years, el cortito as a symbol has again been invoked in the United States, this time in the rights struggle of hotel workers, who are forced to use short-handled mops and brushes to clean floors and toilets, thus spending many hours a day bending, which frequently results in back injuries. The stooped posture of figures in Jean-François Millet's famous Gleaners (1857, Paris, Musée d'Orsay) or Pissarro's Apple Harvest would be familiar to any farmworker or hotel maid, who would immediately understand the meaning of Millet's iconic picture.

Grain harvesting in Europe and North America is today almost completely mechanized—large combines can clear fields in minutes. Some fruits, such as oranges and lemons, can be picked by machine. In Florida, Texas, California, Spain, and elsewhere, tree-shaking machines reduce the human role in citrus fruit harvesting to a minimum. But apple harvesting is another story entirely. In the United States, Europe, and just about everywhere else, apples are picked by hand. The fruit is easily bruised, and efforts to breed an apple with skin tough enough to protect it from damage when it is shaken and falls to the ground or onto a pile of other apples have produced starchy, thick-skinned fruit that is tasteless and hard to chew. Nevertheless, efforts to find mechanical aids to apple picking continue. Self-propelled platforms can carry a dozen workers up and down rows of dwarf trees, permitting fast picking, pruning, tree training, thinning, twining, and trellising. The advantage to this system, according to a report published in the New York Fruit Quarterly, is that "it encourages the same pace of work for an entire work crew, which increases productivity and prevents [the] over/under pruning or hand thinning of trees that can occur . . . with ladders. Physical exertion is reduced (if managed well), allowing a more diverse labor pool. Individuals who could not climb up and down a ladder repeatedly . . . may now be able to do this work." In a few regions of the United States and Europe, especially where labor is in short supply and wages are therefore high, mechanical apple harvesters and sorters have begun to be used. There is widespread belief that these will continue to improve and be used much more in the future.

Picking apples can be dangerous and exhausting. Climbing ladders all day to harvest fruit or prune branches may lead to falls, especially if the trees are tall and the pickers are carrying full baskets. Cuts and scrapes are a constant accompaniment to the work. The repeated reaching up, down, and around branches to grasp fruit may cause stretching injuries to the neck, shoulder, and wrist. And the sheer effort of climbing up and down—sometimes hundreds of times a day—demands workers who are young and fit. A brochure published by the European Union includes advice for the fruit picker: "keep your body in good trim by regular physical exercise; warm up and stretch your muscles



Winslow Homer, Apple Picking, 1878 Terra Foundation for American Art, Chicago

before and after the working shift; alternate work tasks with your colleagues and take short breaks—often; avoid lifting above shoulder height." The advice might also be useful to Olympic athletes, and it is unrealistic given the work regimes generally imposed upon migrant laborers.

In nineteenth-century France, apple picking cannot have been any easier than it is now and was probably harder. With fewer dwarf varieties being grown, harvesters had to climb tall ladders and carry baskets heavy with fruit. The use of sticks to knock fruit from trees was probably limited to apples destined for cider or Calvados: because the apples are crushed anyway, it does not matter if they suffer a few bruises. Without refrigeration or mechanized transport, rates of spoilage must have been high, and workers needed to move fast to bring in a large harvest. If the pickers were mere field hands instead of landowners, they were subjected to the absolute authority of an employer, who might be capricious or cruel. Unprotected by any labor, health, safety, or child-protection laws, fruit pickers were prey to injury, illness, exhaustion, and deprivation of wages. Their housing was modest and food meager, especially when grain harvests were poor. Nevertheless, apple picking, unlike gleaning, hoeing, strawberry picking, lettuce picking, and grape harvesting, has never been perceived to be especially dangerous or excessively laborious. Today, encouraged by pick-your-own programs, middle-class families in several states may go out on a weekend day in fall to harvest apples themselves, thereby obtaining both healthy food and a soupçon of the Golden Age, when one could eat by simply stretching up one's arm and picking. The key to pleasurable picking is, however, not to do very much of it.

Apple picking is a rare subject in art. On the face of it, this is surprising because of the prevalence of other kinds of harvesting scenes by painters from the Limbourg Brothers in the late fourteenth century to Jules Breton in the nineteenth century, and because of the general dietary and symbolic significance of apples. Apple trees were among the earliest fruit cultivars, and apples have been consumed for millennia. As a result, the fruit has been the subject of innumerable songs, poems, myths, sagas, short stories, novels, and essays, from the Greek tale of Heracles (challenged to pick the apples of Hesperides) to Henry David Thoreau's essay "Wild Apples," which begins: "It





FIGURE 88 Walter Frederick Osborne, Apple Gathering, Quimperlé, 1883 National Gallery of Ireland, Dublin

FIGURE 89 William John Hennessy, Gathering Apples, Normandy, 1884 Milmo-Penney Fine Art, Dublin

is remarkable how closely the history of the apple-tree is connected with that of man. The geologist tells us that the order of the Rosaceæ, which includes the Apple, also the true Grasses, and the Labiatæ, or Mints, were introduced only a short time previous to the appearance of man on the globe."<sup>8</sup>

For two reasons apple picking was rarely painted in nineteenth-century France: idealizing fruit harvesters begs credulity and the subject too easily lends itself to allegory. For centuries, artists had been expected to gloss over or disguise the oppressive nature of the relationship between nobles and serfs, landowners and laborers, or industrialists and factory workers. But during the Second Empire and the Third Republic—regimes inaugurated by social and political revolutions—the need to maintain the fiction of class stability and working-class consent was especially important, and art that suggested otherwise was suspected of being subversive and therefore likely to be censored, censorship generally taking the form of exclusion from the annual Salon exhibition.

Yet art was also supposed to be truthful. Naturalism was the governing aesthetic ideology of the whole of the second half of the nineteenth century, and when it came to paintings of peasants and landscapes, Salon viewers expected to be presented with a strong dose of ethnographic and geographical accuracy. Because of these contradictory demands—idealization and truthfulness certain subjects were generally avoided; the antagonism was simply too great. A list of such generally proscribed subjects would include stone breaking, hoeing, threshing, winnowing, and gleaning. (It was precisely because they accepted the challenge posed by these subjects that Gustave Courbet and Millet were so renowned.) And though apple picking was never considered to be as strenuous as gleaning, it too was a difficult subject. Nevertheless, a few artists in Europe and North America tried it: Frederick Rondel, a French-born American painter represented a group of apple pickers from a distance in a painting with that title (c. 1870, present whereabouts unknown); Winslow Homer made a stunningly beautiful watercolor of the subject (fig. 87) at about the same time; and the Irish artists Walter Frederick Osborne and William John Hennessy also tried their hand (figs. 88 and 89). But in each case, the labor of picking was very much obscured and the charm of the girls and boys greatly emphasized.

#### ART AND HARMONY

The other problem with apple picking as a subject in art is that it lends itself too easily to myth and allegory. If an artist wanted to represent Abundance, Beauty, Peace, Plenty, Fecundity, Fertility, Adam and Eve, Paris and Helen, Venus and Cupid, Heracles, Athena, Atalanta, Morgan le Fay, or Snow White, the apple—often presented by a naked or seminaked man or woman—was an essential prop. Perhaps for this reason, the apple was frequently the subject of still lifes by the artists most devoted to the idea of realism, namely, Courbet, Henri Fantin-Latour, and Paul Cézanne. The best way to refute the allegorical impulse was to confront it head on—apples on a table, devoid of goddesses, are good for that. When Courbet painted them, for example, in his still life Apples, Pears, and Primroses on a Table (fig. 90), or Cézanne depicted his, for example, in the watercolor called Still Life with Apples on a Sideboard (fig. 91), no allegory or symbol of any kind was intended. Instead, the apples are, essentially—setting aside unintended psychological meanings—colored forms and masses that constitute a certain spatial, pictorial, and even temporal location. The complex and multiple viewpoints proposed in one of Cézanne's still lifes of apples suggest a consciousness of our own process of seeing—what the phenomenologist philosopher Maurice Merleau-Ponty called the faculty of apperception—to the exclusion of almost anything else.

Pissarro painted apple picking, not apples. He wanted to show the labor involved in picking fruit precisely so that he could show its contradictions resolved—humans, landscape, and labor in harmony—and emphasize the point at the level of form. This is where the musical dots come in. They permit the expression of individuality amid unity so important in anarchist thought. The figures in *Apple Harvest* are all dressed in dots, short dashes, or tight daubs of color (fig. 81). The standing man wears a suit woven of narrow strokes of blue and orange with strong yellow highlights around the edges. The dress of the woman at left consists of a vertical cascade of dots, mostly blue with some orange mixed in. The blouse of the stooping woman in the middle is composed of red and some blue dots arranged like a swag, and her dress is of thin blue and orange brushstrokes. The great advantage of the technique is that it creates

FIGURE 90 Gustave Courbet, Apples, Pears, and Primroses on a Table, 1871–72 Norton Simon Museum, Pasadena, California





Paul Cézanne, Still Life with Apples on a Sideboard, 1900–1906 Dallas Museum of Art

an overall surface that denies the drama conveyed by chiaroscuro. The result is the visual near equivalent of chromaticism in music; it is not narrative and it approaches abstraction. But, for Pissarro, volume and mass as well as narrative still had to be constituted to some degree—we are not yet in the era of Mondrian-especially since the artist had such strong feelings about the potential health, abundance, and social peace available in the countryside, outside the rule of capital. Pissarro created volume, mass, and narrative by varying the direction of the dots. For example, they are organized in a spiral pattern around the man's legs and comprise a waterfall in the figures at right and at left. Figures and landscape are all made of the same stuff but each is variously patterned in order to establish unique individuals, palpable objects, and inhabitable space. True individuality, according to anarchist doctrine, is possible only in a world unified by equality of opportunity and wealth. True harmony is possible only when labor is voluntary, people are enabled to live up to their potential, material needs are satisfied, and relations among humans, other animals, and the earth itself are not exploitative.

Apple Harvest was painted on the outskirts of Éragny-sur-Epte, a village some sixty miles northwest of Paris, where Pissarro and his family moved in 1884. At that time, Éragny had about four hundred inhabitants; today its population is six hundred. The people lived then and live now largely by farming and rearing livestock, though from 1820 until about the end of the nineteenth century, a small but highly efficient cotton mill at Gisors, about two and a half miles away—established by one Jean-Charles Davillier—employed some of the villagers, who lived in workers' houses built to resemble rustic English cottages.9 This local history—both agricultural and industrial—may have contributed to the artist's idea that work and community, production and consumption need not be separated. If the pickers own a fair share of the fruit, or the cider, or the Calvados, and if the factory workers own a share of the products they make as well as the tools and machines they use, labor need no longer be a curse. If apple picking were truly voluntary, the injuries that come from long hours uninterrupted by rest breaks would be few. (There are no overseers in Pissarro's Apple Harvest or in his two earlier versions of the subject.) The women and the man in Pissarro's painting stand together beneath the canopy of the apple tree as they work. They are further bound together by the arcing furrows in the field and the enveloping curve of the horizon—suggesting the curvature of the earth itself—behind them. Here, form and symbol begin to merge; the antagonism between social fact and artistic idealization that might have prevented lesser artists from tackling the subject disappears.

In literature, Émile Zola tried much the same thing as Pissarro does, but with less satisfying results. In his novel *Abbé Mouret's Transgression* (1875), Zola described the moral downfall of Serge Mouret, a priest who was sent to the small village of Les Artaud in Provence to recuperate from a severe brain fever. There he fell in love with his nurse, Albine, who in the course of her ministrations guides him through the abandoned demesne of Paradou—a word that suggests both paradise and paradox. The grounds contained a vast untended orchard, described by Zola with a dissonant, linguistic avalanche that anticipates the chromaticism of Wagner and Pissarro:

They were in the old orchard of the park. A hawthorn hedge, a real wall of greenery with here and there a gap, separated it from everything else. There was quite a forest of fruit trees, which no pruning knife had touched for a century past. Some of the trees had been strangely warped and twisted by the storms which had raged over them; while others, bossed all over with huge knots and full of deep holes, seemed only to hold onto the soil with their bark. The high branches, bent each year by [the] weight of fruit, stretched out like enormous [tennis] rackets; and each tree helped to keep its fellows erect. The trunks were like twisted pillars supporting a roof of greenery; and sometimes narrow cloisters, sometimes light halls were formed, while now and again the verdure swept almost to the ground and left scarcely room to pass. Round each colossus a crowd of wild and self-sown saplings had grown up, thicket-like with the entanglement of their young shoots. In the greenish light which filtered like tinted water through the foliage, in the deep silence of the mossy soil, one heard only the dull thud of the fruit as it was culled by the wind.

Zola then proceeded to describe the various trees—apple, pear, peach, almond, fig, serviceberry, medlar, pomegranate, lemon, orange, and, lastly, cherry:

There were the apple trees, with their limbs twisted like old cripples, with bark gnarled and knotted, and all stained with lichen-growth. There were also smooth pear trees, that shot up mast-like with long slender spars. And there were rosy-blossomed peach-trees that won a place amid this teeming growth as pretty maids do amidst a human crowd by dint of bright smiles and gentle persistence. . . .

Serge settled himself comfortably between two branches and began his breakfast. He no longer paid attention to Albine. He imagined she was in another tree, a few yards away, when, happening to cast his eyes towards the ground, he saw her calmly lying on her back beneath him. She had thrown herself there, and, without troubling herself to use her hands, was plucking with her teeth the cherries which dangled over her mouth.

When she saw she was discovered, she broke out into a peal of laughter, and twisted about on the grass like a fish taken from the water. And finally, crawling along on her elbows, she gradually made the circuit of the tree, snapping up the plumpest cherries as she went along.

"They tickle me so," she cried. "See, there's a beauty just fallen on my neck. They are so deliciously fresh and juicy. They get into my ears, my eyes, my nose, everywhere. They are much sweeter down here than up there." 10

The colors, sounds, and forms deployed by Zola might be the myriad dots and daubs in a neo-impressionist painting, but unlike the latter, they quickly descend into allegory and thus predictability. The plot of the novel obviously concerns original sin, the expulsion from paradise, and the loss of grace—with woman being the instrument of man's fall. Zola's descriptive cascade suggests neither abstraction nor historical reality, but an awkward zone in between. The painter was a better dialectician than his friend the novelist and critic was.

In Apple Harvest, Pissarro worked simultaneously at an atomic and a planetary level. Though born a Jew, he surely knew the writings of Blaise Pascal, the mathematician, physicist, and Jansenist philosopher, and may have thought about the meaning of Pascal's dictum: "Let man then contemplate the whole of nature in her full and grand majesty. . . . No idea approaches it. We may enlarge our conceptions beyond all imaginable space; we only produce atoms in comparison with the reality of things. It is an infinite sphere, the center of which is everywhere, the circumference nowhere." He may also have been reprising in paint the views of his friend the anarchist geographer, revolutionary, and vegetarian Élisée Reclus, who argued in a series of publications, beginning with L'Homme et la terre, that human and natural history cannot be separated, and that sound stewardship of the earth and a close relationship between humanity and nature is essential to the establishment of an ideal social order. He further argued that individuals must gain an understanding of the social, historical, biological, and geographical totality in order to gain a proper self-consciousness, the essential precondition for freedom. "Man is nature becoming self-conscious," Reclus wrote, suggesting, as Pissarro does in Apple Harvest, that the artificial division between labor and landscape must be overcome for true harmony to be achieved.12

- "C'est un très beau pays: une vallée féerique encaissée dans de splendides montagnes" (Cachin 2000, p. 354).
- Texas Department of Housing 2006.
- 3. Cooper et al. 2006, 313-20.
- Vanderwal et al. 2011, 749–56.
- Miranda Sazo, De Marree, and Robinson 2010, 5.
- Veerle Hermans, Harvesting Fruit, p. 16. http:// www.agri-ergonomics .eu/downloads/PDF /Summary/Fruit\_ harvesting\_ENG% 20122009\_LR.pdf
- 7. Gough 1982, 75.
- Thoreau 1862.
- 9. "A Eragny-sur-Epte, il a été construit une belle filature de coton. MM. Davilliers et compagnie ont placé dans cet endroit la roue hydraulique qu'ils ont fait venir d'Angleterre. Les
- ouvriers sont logés dans de petites maisons, bâties à l'instar des cottages Anglais. Eragny est à neuf lieues de Beauyais; il renferme 316 ames" (Touchard-Lafosse, 1836, vol. 1, p. 246). Records indicate that the mill had closed by 1903.
- 10. Zola 1875/2009, ch. 9.
- 11. Pascal 1958, 17.
- "L'homme est la nature prenant conscience d'ellemême" (Reclus 1905–1908, vol. 1, p. 1).



### The Arc of Creation

Auguste Rodin at the Dallas Museum of Art

#### ANTOINETTE LE NORMAND-ROMAIN

The sculpture of Auguste Rodin is represented in the Dallas Museum of Art by a fine collection, much of it donated by Wendy and Emery Reves. Among these works are two major marbles, The Sirens (fig. 92) and The Poet and the Contemplative Life (fig. 99), a number of bronzes, and a wax (fig. 101) that takes us to the heart of Rodin's creative process. Quite early in his career, Rodin developed the habit of making several proofs of each figure that he modeled. This provided a stock of forms that he could combine with others in order to explore new modes of expression without having to repeat the entire modeling process. Thus, in reflecting on individual works in Rodin's repertoire, one must often take several steps backward in order to appreciate the process of his creativity.

Rodin had hoped that the nude study *The Age of Bronze* (*L'Âge d'airain*), exhibited at the Salon of 1877, would launch his career; instead, he found himself accused of taking plaster casts directly from the model, and he spent the next three years working to clear himself of this aspersion. In 1880, as a token of his trust and admiration, Edmond Turquet, the undersecretary of state for public instruction and the fine arts, commissioned from Rodin a monumental door to be decorated with bas-reliefs inspired by Dante's *Divine Comedy*. Like the Romantic artists who preceded him, Rodin focused on the first book of that work, the *Inferno*.

In the confines of the studio, to which only a few people were admitted, he set to work, in his own words, "furiously," on The Gates of Hell (La Porte de l'Enfer). By around 1882, the most famous groups—The Thinker (Le Penseur), The Kiss (Le Baiser), which he removed a few years later, and Ugolino (Ugolin)—were in place. During this period, Rodin modeled hundreds of figures but only a few of them were integrated into the Gates, which were represented in the studio by a vertical wooden frame.

Rodin was intending to finish *The Gates of Hell* in time for the Universal Exposition of 1889, the obvious place to show a work of this scale; it was, after all, one of the principal state commissions of the period. But, for him, slow and steady was the motto. Moreover, his friend Claude Monet had proposed a joint exhibition in the gallery of the art dealer Georges Petit, who was promoting the impressionists. Rodin accepted on the condition—as he wrote to Monet on February 28, 1889—that the exhibition consist of "just you and me." Consequently, he set aside the *Gates* to focus on sculpture of a smaller scale, such as the sensual and expressive figures on which his reputation was based and which were much sought after by collectors.

OPPOSITE
FIGURE 92
Auguste Rodin, The Sirens,
c. 1888
Dallas Museum of Art



FIGURE 93 Auguste Rodin, Jean d'Aire, 1895 Dallas Museum of Art

Nevertheless, he needed one large piece for the exhibition at the Petit gallery and chose The Monument to the Burghers of Calais (Monument des Bourgeois de Calais; fig. 94). Omer Dewavrin, the mayor of Calais, was pressing him to finish this work, which had been commissioned at the beginning of 1885 to commemorate the city's heroic resistance and eventual surrender to the English in 1347. From his very earliest maquette, Rodin had chosen to emphasize the concept of collective sacrifice by presenting six figures, all on the same plane: the six men who had agreed, in spite of the expectation that they would be executed, to carry the keys of the city to the English king. His conception ran counter to traditional representations in which the spotlight fell on one individual, and Rodin emphasized the originality of his approach. Instead of describing the scene or suggesting its context through allegorical language, he wanted viewers to share the emotions of the burghers. "You have conveyed this idea in a powerful and entirely heroic fashion," Dewayrin wrote, admiringly, on November 23, 1884. "Please accept my compliments. If we are able to realize this monument, it will be exceptional."3 According to the poet Rainer Maria Rilke, Rodin had chosen to represent the burghers at "the moment of their setting forth. He depicted the way in which these men began their journey; he was aware of the way in which each man was mindful, in that moment, of his entire life."4

In January 1886, Rodin announced that "of the six figures, three are very advanced and the three others are on their way."5 He modeled them at life size, first nude (fig. 93) and then dressed in the garments of the condemned. For the latter, the plaster models of the nudes were clad in real smocks and then cast, the garments falling in long folds that widen toward the base. They are evocative of Gothic sculpture but reference more directly Donatello's prophets made for the campanile of the Duomo in Florence. The first three figures were exhibited at Georges Petit's gallery in May 1887; the last was completed in late 1888. The group made its debut at Petit's exhibition Monet-Rodin, which opened on June 21, 1889. For Rodin, finishing the piece in that time was unprecedented.

The assemblage of the six Burghers of Calais can, therefore, be dated to early 1889. There is nothing random about their composition, which is profoundly symbolic. They are meticulously grouped around Eustache de Saint-Pierre; each has his own place, and the empty spaces between are as important as the figures. Although they are carried forward by a kind of sculptural momentum, they struggle to lift their feet from their native soil, and the oblique rhythm of their legs and backs underscores the difficulty of the decision they had to make. "I did not group them in a triumphant apotheosis because such a glorification of their heroism would not have been realistic. . . . They are still wondering whether they will have the strength to make the ultimate sacrifice. . . . Their souls press forward but their feet refuse to move. They drag themselves on laboriously, as much because they are weak with starvation as because of the horror of the penalty they must pay. . . ."6

Although it embodied a new conception of public monumentality, the group was even more notable for its humanity. Rodin had sought to communicate to viewers the feelings of human beings very like themselves. The six people with whom he asks us to identify are suffering; all of them are ready for the sacrifice, but not without an inner struggle. Each, as his personality dictates, is in a different state of mind. In the garb of a condemned man and with a rope around his neck, Pierre de Wissant, with his bent arm framing his face, embodies the drama. Jean de Fiennes is an incarnation of anguish.



Auguste Rodin, The Monument to the Burghers of Calais, 1884–95 Musée Rodin, Paris

With his feet firmly anchored to the ground, Jean d'Aire, who carries the keys of the city, is the very image of steadfastness (fig. 93). Unveiled in Calais on June 3, 1895, the group quickly transcended the local historical context to take its place among the great triumphs of sculpture. By rejecting the descriptive style of traditional public monuments and, instead, depicting what humans such as ourselves might have felt in the same situation, Rodin had created one of the masterpieces of an era that gave a central place to the workings of the human mind.

Thus it was that, because Rodin chose to exhibit with Monet in a commercial gallery in 1889, the *Cates* were never entirely finished. This did not prevent the figures created in connection with them from taking on an autonomous existence, either alone or in groups. Arthur Symons, the English poet and critic, understood this best of all: "Often a single figure takes form under his hands and he cannot understand what the figure means; its lines seem to will something, and to ask for the completion of their purpose. He puts it aside, and one day, happening to see it as it lies among other formless suggestions of form, it groups itself with another fragment, itself hitherto unexplained: suddenly there is a composition, the idea has penetrated the clay, life has given birth to the soul."

In I Am Beautiful (Je suis belle; fig. 95), the earliest of the works in the Dallas Museum of Art and one of the first significant examples of assemblage, we recognize Falling Man (L'Homme qui tombe) and Crouching Woman (Femme accroupie).

FIGURE 95 Auguste Rodin, I Am Beautiful (Je suis belle), 1882 Dallas Museum of Art



Both were made for the *Gates*, and their union seems, in retrospect, inevitable, so extreme is the freedom of attitude that they display. Rodin simply endowed the *Man* with arms in order to allow him to embrace the *Woman*. The group was exhibited in Paris in the spring of 1886. Should we see, as has been suggested, Rodin himself and Camille Claudel in this sculpture? Rodin, who met Claudel in 1882, had fallen violently in love with her by 1886. Terrified, Claudel fled to England during the summer of that year. If we accept this interpretation, the inscription on the base, which was added later, of a line by Baudelaire might be understood as the complaint of the rejected lover: "I am beautiful, O mortals, like a dream carved in stone."

In accordance with the internal logic that guided the development of the Gates of Hell, the group I Am Beautiful (Je suis belle) eventually found its place toward the top of the right-hand pilaster. By then, The Shades (Les Ombres) had long since occupied the summit of the structure. The figure used for Shades is related to Adam, a work almost certainly modeled in 1878 and exhibited in the Salon of 1881, and is a clear example of Rodin's debt to Michelangelo. The group consists of three identical figures and represents the recently dead, who look down in terror at the throngs of the damned among whom they are soon to be hurled. But its principal function is aesthetic and it completes the ensemble much like a pediment.

In January 1886, Félicien Champsaur had noted these three figures "dominating everything [and] seeming to personify the sentence, which they gesture toward, inscribed on the pediment: 'Lasciate ogni speranza, voi ch'entrate' (Abandon hope all ye who enter here)." This comment would seem to suggest that the Shades had not yet had their right hands removed and were actually pointing to the inscription that Dante had read at the entrance of the Inferno, as if they were testifying to the significance of the composition as a whole. But did they ever have their right hands? A photograph of the upper part of the Cates taken in April 1887 (fig. 97) shows them precisely as we know them today.

Having found their definitive form early, the *Shades* mark an important step in Rodin's development, demonstrating his early interest in both the multiple and the partial, fragmentary figure. The brutal amputation that they have suffered is a harbinger of the simplification of forms that was to characterize his work from the mid-1890s—a simplification that had probably been inspired by classical statuary but found fertile ground in the Symbolism of the time. Thus the removal of the right hand—the active hand—becomes another way of signifying despair. Proceeding by suggestion rather than reference, Rodin introduces us directly into the world of symbols or, as Mallarmé would have it, of states of mind.

Rodin grouped these three figures, turning each slightly on its axis relative to the next, in order to offer the maximum number of points of view. He may have borrowed this idea from seventeenth-century paintings, such as the *Triple Portrait of Cardinal de Richelieu* by Philippe de Champaigne (probably 1642, London, National Gallery), in which the same person would be presented frontally and in both profiles. Doubtless, it was also a way of applying his method of working with profiles. We cannot walk around the *Gates*, but we can, in the *Shades*, see the same figure face on and in three-quarter right and left profile. The repeated gesture may evoke that of Raphael's apostles in the tapestry, the *Miraculous Draught of Fishes* (1515–16, London, Victoria and Albert Museum). Rodin could have studied the cartoon for the tapestry when he was in London. <sup>10</sup> The repetition confers on



FIGURE 96 Auguste Rodin, The Shade, 1880 Dallas Museum of Art

the group such dramatic intensity that it seems more than likely that neither hands nor inscription ever existed. Should we perhaps find an implicit reference to the group in a comparison made by Marcel Proust? Seeing three trees that seemed to evoke a place now beyond recall—somewhere that he surely knew but could not identify—Proust likens them to "shades" vainly soliciting his attention: "In their simple and passionate gesture, I could discern the helpless anguish of a beloved person who has lost the power of speech, and feels that he will never be able to say to us what he wished and what we can never guess."1

The Dallas Museum of Art possesses one Shade in the original size (fig. 96), that of the group on the Gates of Hell. But, as were many other figures by Rodin, it was later enlarged. Three large plasters set side by side—Three Desperate Men (Les trois désespérants) as they are sometimes called—were exhibited on scaffolding in the open air at the Salon de la Société nationale des beaux-arts in 1902 and were much admired. Rodin, meanwhile, continued to explore the possibilities of this figure. He had it photographed, indoors and out, in many different states, and went so far as to remove the left arm completely. He also attempted to use the entire figure—or fragments of it—in assemblages with other works.

The figure was not cast in the original size, that is, on the scale in which it is seen in the Gates, until after the artist's death. The large model was, however, cast twice during his lifetime, once for the Musée des Beaux-Arts de Lyon and a second time for the Swedish collector Ernest Thiel (who owned many of Edvard Munch's paintings). That cast now stands over Thiel's tomb in the garden of his villa in Stockholm. At the time, Thiel's cast resembled the original version

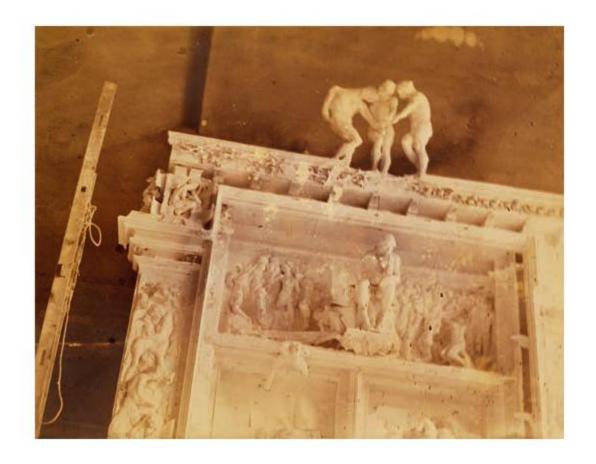


FIGURE 97 Upper Part of "The Gates of Hell," photograph by William Elborne, c. 1887 Musée Rodin, Paris

in lacking a right hand but, strangely enough, Rodin was worried about the critical reception this might provoke, and he had the missing hand restored by the Czech sculptor Josef Mařatka. This Shade was the prototype for the group Large Shades (Grandes ombres), which was assembled by Léonce Bénédite, the first curator of the Musée Rodin in Paris, after the model of the smaller scale figures. Rodin himself never assembled the larger versions on a single base.

The Sirens (Les Sirènes) of which Dallas has a version (fig. 92), are also connected to the Gates of Hell, placed halfway up the left-hand door. They were there when the American journalist Truman Bartlett met Rodin in 1887 and reported enthusiastically: "[They] make perhaps the most subtle composition on the door. No illustration can give any idea of their charm and color, for their beauty begins and ends with themselves." Rodin, who often played on the number three, had rarely produced such a splendid composition. Kneeling Female Nude (Nu féminin agenouillé), a marble of provocative sensuality, was the foundation for this group of three women, two of whom are seen from the front and the third from the back. They were no doubt inspired by the "extravagant garland of sirens" in the Disembarkation of Marie de' Medici (Débarquement de Marie de Médicis) by Rubens (1662–64, Paris, Musée du Louvre), whose arms are interlaced to form a motif that seems born from the spindrift of the waves. Of the attributes of these half-women, half-fish of classical mythology—symbols of both temptation and damnation—Rodin retained only their familiarity with the sea and their power to seduce.

As with I Am Beautiful, there existed a version independent of the Cates, cast in bronze in 1889, when Jean Escoula began the pointing and scaling up for a transposition to marble. Like most established sculptors of his time, Rodin himself did not carve the marble or any other stone. Such hard labor was left to specialized workers or young sculptors; Antoine Bourdelle, for example, worked for Rodin before establishing his own independent career. The marble version of Sirens was sent to George Alexander Drummond, the first Canadian collector to buy a work by Rodin, in late 1892. When a subject was successful, Rodin never hesitated to reproduce it in multiple examples. His was a substantial studio—more than fifty people were said to be working there around 1900—and he had to produce, exhibit, and sell large numbers of sculptures, preferably in marble, which cost more than bronze did. We know, for instance,

of more than ten versions in marble of Eternal Spring (L'Éternel Printemps), one of his most popular groups.

The Dallas Sirens are almost certainly the second version of this composition, the version that served as the basis of the bronze casts of the large model made from 1899 on: the dimensions correspond, as do the details of the oval base on which chisel marks are very clearly, perhaps too sharply, visible. This series continued in the early twentieth century with the considerably larger third and fourth versions (1901–1902 and 1904), which are both magnificent. To be found today in the collections of the Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek in Copenhagen and Thielska Galleriet in Stockholm, respectively, they show the influence of Art Nouveau. In that respect, comparison with the works of Camille Claudel is instructive, notably with Claudel's Maturity (L'Âge mûr, 1899, Paris, Musée Rodin), the base of which is similarly constituted by a large wave, and above all with The Wave (La Vague, 1902, Paris, Musée Rodin). In the latter, however, Claudel comes close to the genre of decorative art, whereas Rodin's Sirens, in effacing the frontiers between different media of artistic expression, is a magnificent example of Symbolism: these women, as lithe as flower stems, possess a musical quality that was one of the sources of their success. In 1900, Arsène Alexandre compared the trio to Wagner's Rhine maidens. For the great collector Dr. Max Linde of Lübeck, they demonstrated "the intimate connection between sculpture and music. Yesterday, while I was playing a piano sonata by Beethoven, the marble seemed to stir and music and marble fused, giving me a divine appreciation of art."14

At the same time as The Sirens, and also donated by Wendy and Emery Reves, a second marble entered the Museum: the column entitled The Poet and the Contemplative Life (Le Poète et la vie contemplative) (fig. 99), a work that is also known as The Dream of Life (Le Songe de la vie) or, after its first owner, The Fenaille Column (Colonne Fenaille). A pioneer of the oil industry and a specialist in eighteenthcentury prints and Gobelin tapestries, Maurice Fenaille first met Rodin in 1885 and began by purchasing or commissioning sculptures for the decoration of the villa that he was constructing in Neuilly. In 1897, he financed the publication of a lavish album, The Drawings of Auguste Rodin (Les Dessins de Auguste Rodin), thanks to which we can still see the sumptuous original colors of the hundred and forty-two drawings reproduced in facsimile; the originals have since lost much of their brilliance. In the following year, when Rodin's statue of Balzac was rejected by the Société des gens de lettres by which it had been commissioned, on the grounds that the writer was not "recognizable," Fenaille demonstrated his support for the sculptor by commissioning a portrait of his wife. The first bust shows her as a fashionable woman, but the sittings were so long that Marie Fenaille fell asleep, and Rodin then represented her with her head on one side and her neck and shoulders forming a single graceful line. Four marbles and some twenty studies give us access to the very heart of the creative process. For Rodin it was more important to capture the spirit of the model than her likeness. The Sirens and The Poet and the Contemplative Life belong to that category of works in which form fuses with matter, the non finito (lack of finish) allowing us to declare that sculpture is never completed; the form can always change because life is eternally in motion.

Fenaille bought several works by Rodin in which we perceive the inspiration of the eighteenth century. The sculptor was a great aficionado of this period,







LEFT TO RIGHT

FIGURE 98 Auguste Rodin, Plaster Sketch of the Fenaille Column, 1984 Musée Rodin, Paris

FIGURE 99
Auguste Rodin, The Poet and the Contemplative Life (The Fenaille Column), 1896
Dallas Museum of Art

FIGURE 100
Auguste Rodin, Mask
of Iris, before 1894
Musée Rodin, Paris

and The Poet and the Contemplative Life shows signs of this interest. Executed in 1894, it consists of a Solomonic column decorated with five figures linked by wings, clouds, and drapery that together form a kind of garland. Three of these figures antedated the column and had already been used: Kneeling Man (Homme agenouillé), in the Gates of Hell, and Pain no. 2 (La Douleur no. 2) and Female Nude (Nu féminin), in many different compositions. Two heads—identifiable only in the plaster maquette (fig. 98) because their individuality was effaced by the transposition to marble—frequently reappeared after this work: the heads of Slavic Woman (Femme slave) and Man with Pointed Eyebrows (L'Homme aux arcades sourcilières en pointe). The existence at this early date (around 1894) of the latter indicates clearly that it is not, as has sometimes been thought, a portrait of Vaslav Nijinsky: the dancer would have been only five at the time!

The column is crowned by The Mask of the Poet (Le Masque du poète), originally a head known as the Mask of Iris (Le Masque d'Iris; fig. 100). Later enlarged and exhibited in that form in Rome, London, and Edinburgh, it made a strong impression on Henry Moore: the simplification of the volumes, emphasized by the enlargement, makes it one of the most modern of Rodin's works. The contrast between the idealized upper part of the face and the lower part, with deformations that seem almost expressionistic, is disconcerting. The reworking of the chin and the hair has tended to obscure the link between Iris and the Poet. An entry in the catalogue for the solo exhibition of Rodin's work at the time of the Universal Exposition in Paris in 1900 was the first clue to this





FIGURE 101 Auguste Rodin, Untitled (The Poet), n.d. Dallas Museum of Art

FIGURE 102 Auguste Rodin, The Poet and the Siren, 1909 Musée Rodin, Paris

relationship: "this head, with its robust character but dreamy expression, is the head that crowns a marble column animated with many figures that now forms part of the Fenaille collection under the title The Poet and Life."15 One of the examples of the Mask of Iris in the collection of the Musée Rodin in Paris bears the inscription: "Fenaille column head."

The column was exhibited in 1897 at the Salon and, as mentioned, in 1900. It was admired and often reproduced. An astonishing work, definitely conceived as a decorative piece, it is consistent with the approach that Rodin was taking at the time. Far from attempting to show or narrate anything, sculpture, like poetry, was henceforth to embrace pure subjectivity. Indeed, in 1900, when the Gates of Hell were first exhibited, Rodin decided at the last moment not to put the figures back in place; the only exceptions were the Shades. When the public first saw the Gates, they were empty and therefore lacking all subject; the space animated by whorls of clouds offered unlimited scope to the imagination.

The Dallas Museum of Art is also fortunate to possess a compelling example of Rodin's work in a very different genre: the sketch. Few museums in the United States can claim as much. This small male nude, in wax (fig. 101), is sometimes referred to as The Poet because it depicts the same figure that is in the marble sculpture The Poet and the Siren (1909, Paris, Musée Rodin; fig. 102). Long overlooked, the figure adorned the pediment of a cupboard into which it had been incorporated by the Reveses, but there is no doubt about its provenance: the figure is inscribed "À mon ami [To my friend] / Arsène Alexandre / Rodin." Alexandre was a journalist and art critic who greatly admired Rodin and unstintingly supported him during the Balzac affair. Rodin subsequently asked him to write the introduction and entries to the catalogue of his exhibition in 1900.

Clearly, the Poet was dear to Rodin's heart. We can identify him in several assemblages exhibited in 1900. In complete defiance of anatomical construction, the original model is modified in this wax with a rudimentary arm added across the shoulders and an embryonic leg that seems to end in a clog sketchily indicated on the pedestal. The head of the wax is, however, not that of the *Poet*, with its short curly hair. It has been replaced by that of the *Little Sphinx* (*Petite sphinge*), which is stretched forward, its hair gathered in a chignon.

The freedom exhibited in the small figurine makes it perhaps more touching than the finished marbles and bronzes are. They, however, tell us much more about the way in which Rodin thought of sculpture. Thus, from the most spontaneous to the most highly finished, from the most secret to the most public of realizations, the ensemble in the Dallas collection gives us a comprehensive understanding of Rodin's work that many museums might envy.

### Translated by Chris Miller

- See Antoinette Le Normand-Romain, The Bronzes of Rodin: Catalogue of Works in the Musée Rodin (Paris: Réunion des musées nationaux and Musée Rodin, 2007).
- "rien que vous et moi" (Monet to Rodin, February 28, 1889, archives of the Musée Rodin, Paris).
- "Vous avez rendu l'idée d'une façon saisissante et tout-à-fait héroïque.
  ... Recevez toutes mes félicitations. Si nous parvenons à exécuter ce monument, il sera unique" (Omer Dewavrin to Auguste Rodin, November 23, 1884, archives of the Musée Rodin, Paris).
- "l'instant du départ. Il vit comment ces hommes se mirent en route; il sentit comment en chacun d'eux était encore une fois toute la vie qu'il avait vécue" (Rilke 1928, 105).
- "sur six figures j'en ai trois très avancées et les trois autres se montent" (Rodin to Dewavrin, January 11, 1886, archives of the Musée Rodin, Paris).
- 6. "Je ne les ai pas groupés en une apothéose triomphante: car une telle glorification de leur héroïsme n'aurait correspondu à rien de réel. . . . . Ils s'interrogent encore pour savoir s'ils auront la force d'accomplir le

- suprême sacrifice. . . . Leur âme les pousse en avant et leurs pieds refusent de marcher. Ils se traînent péniblement, autant à cause de la faiblesse à laquelle les a réduits la famine, qu'à cause de l'épouvante du supplice. . . . " (see Gsell 1914, 67).
- Arthur Symons 1902, 965–66; quoted in Butler 1980, 117.
- "Je suis belle, ô mortels, comme un rêve de pierre...."
- 9. "dominant le tout [ . . . qui] semblent incarner la phrase qu'ils montrent écrite sur le fronton:
  Lasciate ogni speranza, voi ch'entrate (Vous qui entrez, laissez toute espérance)" (Félicien Champsaur, "Celui qui revient de l'Enfer: Auguste Rodin," Le Figaro, January 6, 1886).
- At the time, in the South Kensington Museum, London, which is now the Victoria and Albert Museum.
- "Dans leur gesticulation naïve et passionnée, je reconnaissais le regret impuissant d'un être aimé qui a perdu l'usage de la parole, sent qu'il ne pourra nous dire ce qu'il veut et que nous ne savons pas deviner" (Proust 1964, 719; in translation, Proust 2003, 407).
- 12. Bartlett 1889, 225.

- "prodigieuse guirlande de sirènes" (Cladel 1936, 173).
- 14. "le connex [sic] intime entre la sculpture et la musique. Hier lorsque je jouais au piano un sonate de Beethoven, le marbre me sembla se remuer. et la musique et marbre se confondaient en me donnant un enthousiasme de l'art divine [sic]" (Dr. Max Linde to Rodin, 22 September 1902, archives of the Musée Rodin, Paris). [Dr Linde's agreements are not impeccable; he may have meant "an enthusiasm for divine art"—Translator's note.]
- 15. "Cette tête d'un caractère robuste, mais d'une expression de rêve, est celle qui surmonte une colonne de marbre, animée de nombreuses figures, faisant partie de la collection Fenaille, sous le titre: Le Poète et la Vie" (Alexandre 1900, p. 4, no. 3).



# Staging, Psychology, and Sexuality

Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec's Prostitutes

RICHARD THOMSON

Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec made his pastel, *Prostitutes* (figs. 103 and 104), the fine work that is the subject of this essay, from what at first sight are unpromising materials. The subject does not depict the human condition at its most noble, and the generic title *Femmes de maison* is a succinctly elegant French articulation that in English translates bluntly as "prostitutes in a brothel." The media used are an unusual and experimental combination: fragile, sensitive powdery pastel on roughly textured emery board (fig. 103). Yet from the base matter of humanity and his equivocal materials, Lautrec crafted a remarkable object. Above all, *Prostitutes* demonstrates his extraordinary draftsmanship.

One senses that he began with the central figure, which forms the vertical axis of the composition. She was surely drawn from life, perhaps from a professional model in the studio, possibly from an actual prostitute in a brothel. The woman's rather slender body dominates the composition, her flesh still youthful, though with some of the muscle tone beginning to slacken. Her pale nakedness reflects the muted indoor light, the flesh tone picking up the ambient blues. The second figure of a woman would have been a later addition, and her full shape, clad in a billowing pink chemise topped with a mid-blue scarf, does much to fill the left-hand side of the composition. The right, by contrast, opens out, briefly suggesting the room, with the iron frame of a single bed over which is spread disheveled electric-blue fabric. The blue accents are offset by the striking ginger hair of the central woman, the pastel of which Lautrec seems to have moistened and smudged. Warm tones are picked up by both the picture on the wall behind her head and the furniture that she faces, Lautrec consciously orchestrating the chromatics of his work, offsetting the blues with their complementary orange. This was a work made by a thirty-year-old artist in full control of his powers. His command of the human figure is evident, with only some slight adjustments to the position of her right elbow. The confident drawing satisfyingly models the naked body and places it in pictorial space; around it, Lautrec—with different levels of gestural intensity-blocked in the second woman and did enough to suggest the domestic setting. The whole has a comfortable balance between the solid and the approximate, indicating where the artist particularly looked, requiring the spectator to do the same. For all its apparently spontaneous and vibrant handling, Prostitutes was a skillfully crafted object, the artist dictating what and how we see.

OPPOSITE
FIGURE 103
Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec,
Prostitutes, 1894
Detail of figure 104

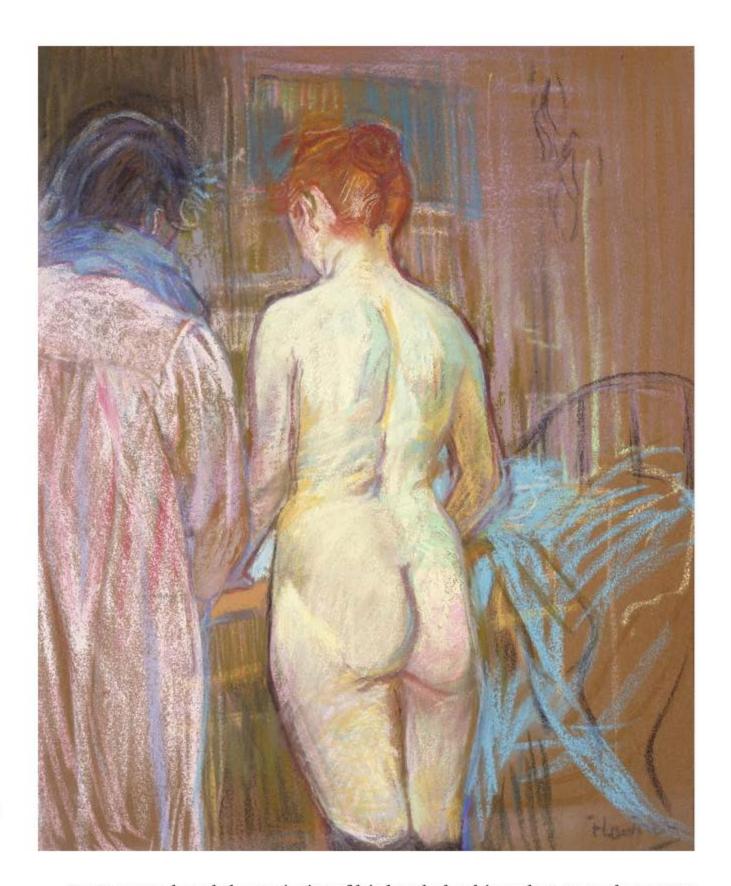


FIGURE 104 Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, Prostitutes, 1894 Dallas Museum of Art

Lautrec produced the majority of his brothel subjects between about 1893 and 1896, when he staged a one-man show at the Manzi-Joyant gallery in Paris. There he displayed the brothel scenes in a discreet room upstairs, which he showed only to trusted friends.¹ Prostitutes dates from this period and belongs within that group. Lautrec has, of course, a celebrated reputation as a painter of brothel life. But close analysis of these pictures reveals that they involved considerable variety and should not be seen as lumpen category. Lautrec depicted the world of prostitution in different media, chiefly in his trademark peinture à l'essence (pigment thinned with turpentine) on board, but also in color lithography—as with the Elles album of 1896—and in pastel; Prostitutes is one of several such subjects in that delicate medium.² The brothel subjects also encouraged Lautrec to essay a range of compositional and narrative strategies. Yet another crucial dimension to Lautrec's brothel pictures is their interplay with other cultural forms and debates around them.

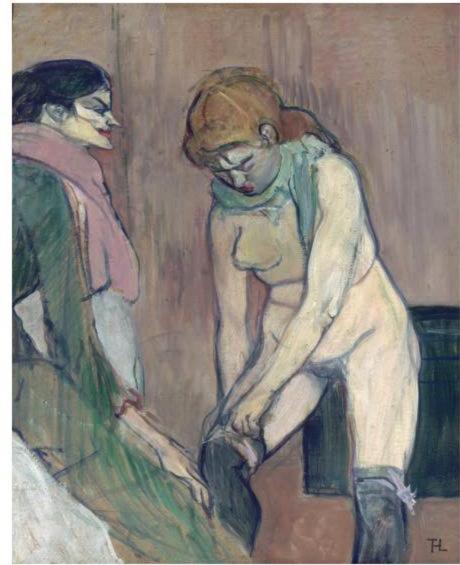
These pictures fall into different categories.3 Some are frankly, almost drearily domestic, representing the women at their daily chores and pastimes, such as bed making, gossiping over a meal, or telling one anothers' fortunes.4

Others suggest a narrative interplay between two figures, the facial features often exaggerated to give a caricatural, even grotesque, quality to the protagonists. We find this, for example, in The Woman with a Tattoo (1894, Switzerland, private collection), in which the chunky tattooed female is prettified by a petite, pointy-featured friend, and in The Laundryman (1894, Albi, Musée Toulouse-Lautrec), where it seems to be suggested that he is leering because the absentminded tart has let her peignoir hang open. 5 Another group of brothel pictures, such as On the Staircase at the rue des Moulins (1893, private collection), are simply lewd.6 A fourth group depicts lesbian couples, and Lautrec typically staged these as delicate moments of psychological engagement between the women, tentative, affectionate, and pre-erotic. He did paint some straightforward portraits of the brothel inmates. Some are named, as in Marcelle (1894, Albi, Musée Toulouse-Lautrec), and for these Lautrec favored the profile format. This combination echoed the formula of the police photograph, of which some sixty thousand were held at the Paris Préfecture de Police by 1890, under the aegis of the pioneering criminal statistician Alphonse Bertillon.\* Lautrec's depictions of brothel life and personnel were thus very various. The material could be manipulated to suit his artistic interests, but the parallel with police photographs suggests that, to understand Lautrec's representations, it may be necessary to look both to the picture-making concerns Lautrec shared with fellow artists and also beyond, to the wider contemporary culture with which he was engaged.

In *Prostitutes* Lautrec obviously set up a contrast between the naked and the clothed. The figure on the left is completely covered—except for the smallest flash of ear-whereas the central women is bare-except for the black stockings that just make themselves visible at the lower edge, their presence revealing that she is not strictly naked but instead more-or-less unclothed: a more intimate and titillating state. Nakedness was a concept that had emerged in the second half of the nineteenth century, challenging the nude vaunted by academic art—that ideal figure of bodily harmony, neither setting nor clothes sullying its aesthetic integrity. Nakedness was, by contrast, a factor of naturalism, a straightforward indicator of physical actuality. As Joris-Karl Huysmans put it in his review of the 1881 impressionist exhibition, people are usually naked only "in bed, in the artist's studio, in the operating theatre and in the bath." For example, Edgar Degas's Toilette after the Bath (fig. 105), dating from the mid-1880s, took a plausible narrative of the domestic holding up a towel or robe as her mistress steps out of or into her bath. Either might be the narrative, Degas presenting the mistress—depicted only as a flank and trailing arm—moving one way and the maid tilting in the other direction. With the mistress's back turned, the maid ventures an insolently appraising glance, adding an edgy interpersonal nuance to the scene. It is significant that the model Degas used for the maid was Réjane, a reputed actress, as if he knew that to enhance the mundane narrative of his domestic scene with psychological intensity, he needed a model with theatrical gifts.10

Lautrec also played with nakedness and nudity. In about 1894 he made a painting from life, representing a lithe young model pulling on a stocking." It vividly demonstrates his ability as a draftsman, swiftly manipulating the brush loaded with thinned paint to catch the forms in movement. Lautrec then recycled this figure in a second painting, moving her slightly off-center,





Edgar Degas, The Toilette after the Bath, c. 1885 Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek, Copenhagen

FIGURE 106 Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, Woman Pulling on Her Stocking, 1894 Musée d'Orsay, Paris coarsening her face, thickening her body, and presenting it more immodestly (fig. 106). To the left he added another woman, using the crow-faced model who also appears in *The Woman with a Tattoo*. This rather improvised relationship is not entirely satisfactory—it is not clear where the gaze of the green-clad woman falls, and her arm is ludicrously long—but Lautrec was evidently trying to suggest some kind of narrative: of voyeurism, perhaps, or proprietorship.¹² The difference between Degas's and Lautrec's pairings of the naked and the clothed is that Degas was concerned to show psychological nuance and needed an actress to offer and hold the expression he sought, whereas Lautrec took a more caricatural approach, rendering the naked body unforgivingly and tipping the physiognomies toward the grotesque.

A crucial aspect of Prostitutes, and one that differentiates it from Woman Pulling on Her Stocking, is its insistent focus on the figure seen from behind. It is a standard convention of much world art that the human figure, especially the central one in a composition, should be seen from the front, engaging with the viewer via facial expression and gesture in a way that communicates and involves. However, the vagaries and accidents of everyday life do not correspond with the conventions of art. This was increasingly an issue for the generation of artists who preceded Lautrec. Reacting against the received wisdom of the academic tradition and responding to the increasing metropolitization of the modern world, artists in the 1870s had developed pictorial idioms intended to heighten the naturalism of their pictures. In 1876 the novelist and critic Edmond Duranty published a pamphlet, La Nouvelle Peinture, which appeared at the same time as the second impressionist exhibition. In it Duranty attempted to explain the "new painting" in terms of its naturalistic treatment of the modern world. "In real life," he wrote, "views of things and people are manifested in a thousand unexpected ways." He argued that not only was the way in which we see the figure in the everyday world fragmented and haphazard, but also that our habits of observation, our perceptions of other people, are attuned to this: "A back should reveal temperament, age and social position, a pair of hands should reveal the magistrate or the merchant, and a gesture should reveal an entire range of feelings." Duranty allusively credited Edgar Degas as the leading Parisian artist responsible for finding visual form for these expressly modern, diffuse, and partial ways of seeing. At the second impressionist exhibition, Gustave Caillebotte had echoed these prescriptions with his Young Man at His Window (1875, private collection), depicting his younger brother from behind, gazing out over the boulevard Malesherbes. In 1888 Caillebotte had submitted to an exhibition of Les XX (The Twenty, a group of avant-garde artists in Brussels) an even more daring back view, Man at His Bath (see fig. 31), though this canvas seems to have been shown in a private room, perhaps because the figure's nakedness was considered too natural, too immodest. Lautrec was a fellow exhibitor, and this painting may have come to his attention there.

As Lautrec emerged during the second half of the 1880s from his academic training and developed his individual identity as an artist, his instinct was to work as a naturalist, depicting the everyday world and finding ways to do so that corresponded with the vagaries of vision. Inevitably he practiced representing the figure from behind, as in *The Model Resting* (1889, Los Angeles, J. Paul Getty Museum) or *Woman Arranging Her Hair* (1891, Oxford, Ashmolean Museum). But these paintings of his early maturity remain exercises in foreshortening and movement, respectively; narrative plays little or no part.

At this period naturalism was not only manifesting itself in the visual arts, but also in the theater. In March 1887 the young actor-manager André Antoine opened the Théâtre-Libre in Montmartre, Lautrec's quartier of Paris. Antoine's aim was to perform plays that were naturalistic, and he used devices of stage design and performance to that end. In terms of staging, for instance, in October 1888 a play called The Butchers (Les Bouchers) by Fernand Icres was presented with real sides of beef hanging on set, dripping with blood.15 From the point of view of performance, one of Antoine's tricks was to flout theatrical convention and sometimes have his actors speak with their backs to the audience. As a directorial device, the intention was to make the play more plausible, closer to the lifelike. This "playing the back" angered the distinguished conservative critic Francisque Sarcey, who, from his theatrical column in Le Temps, thundered against the practice in Antoine's staging of the Goncourt brothers' Soeur Philomène because it broke with one of the established conventions of the stage, that actors play to the audience.16 The debate resonated beyond the world of the theater. At the Société nationale des beauxarts in 1893 Alfred Roll exhibited an enormous canvas, Centenary of the Estates General (Versailles, Musée National du Château), representing a fête that had taken place four years previously. In his review for L'Art et la vie the critic Jean Robiquet observed that the way that the crowd in the painting "teems, stirs and agitates in a very lifelike brouhaha" is how "M. Antoine would no doubt have proceeded" with such a scene at his theater: in other words, by "playing the back."18 The debate about Antoine's naturalistic experiments on stage had seeped into the discussion of pictorial representation.

Lautrec was a keen theater-goer and attended the Théâtre-Libre. Significantly, he depicted figures seen from behind frequently in the lithographs of theatrical subjects that he made during the early and mid-1890s. Several

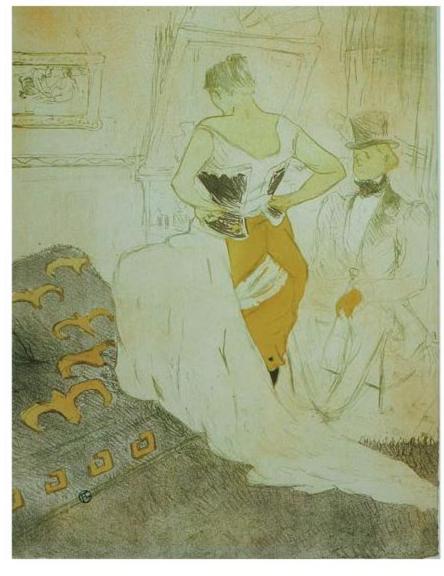
of these, appropriately enough, feature Antoine himself, for example, At the Théâtre-Libre: Antoine in "L'Inquiétude" of 1893 or Yahne and Antoine, in "L'Age Difficile" of 1895. 19 Lautrec used the device for his program (fig. 107) for "L'Argent" ("Money"), performed at the Théâtre-Libre in 1895, and employed it for lithographs for other theaters, such as Lugné-Poe and Bady in "Image" at the Théâtre de l'Oeuvre in 1894. 20 The back also appears consistently in Elles, Lautrec's album of color lithographs published in 1896, a series on the intimate life of the prostitute or, more likely, kept woman. 21 The cover of Elles sets the tone, and three of the twelve prints in the album depict a woman from behind: Woman Washing Herself, Woman Looking in the Mirror, and Woman in a Corset: A Passing Conquest (fig. 108). 22 In sum, during the mid-1890s Lautrec used the figure seen from behind in prints chiefly of two subjects: the theater—appropriately enough—and the intimate female world of the Elles album, contemporaneous with and overlapping in theme with brothel pictures such as Prostitutes.

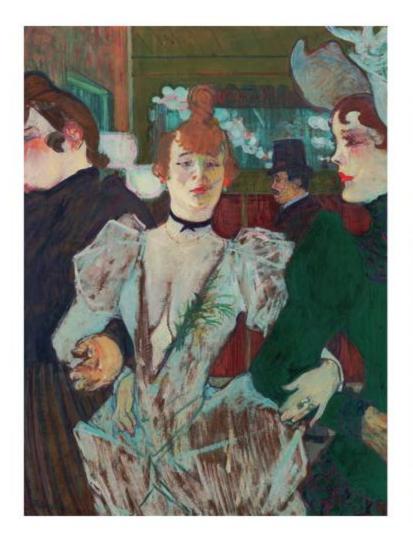
What does the depiction of the back suggest? An obvious place to start is with the front. Seeing a figure frontally suggests directness. Lautrec used frontality in La Goulue at the Moulin Rouge (fig. 109), the louche dancer's outrageously licentious persona frankly conveyed by the emphasis on her seedy expression and gaping cleavage. By contrast, the back can be used to suggest modesty. In 1895 Camille Pissarro painted a rural girl posing naked in his studio, the view from behind and the rather gauche posture, adapted from a drawing, evoking shyness.<sup>23</sup> Similarly Roll, in After the Ball (c. 1886, Nantes, Musée des Beaux-Arts), turned the woman from our view, which might be the privileged gaze of the husband, as she sets about disrobing, concentrating on her own private concerns. In such images the back suggests feminine rituals from which men

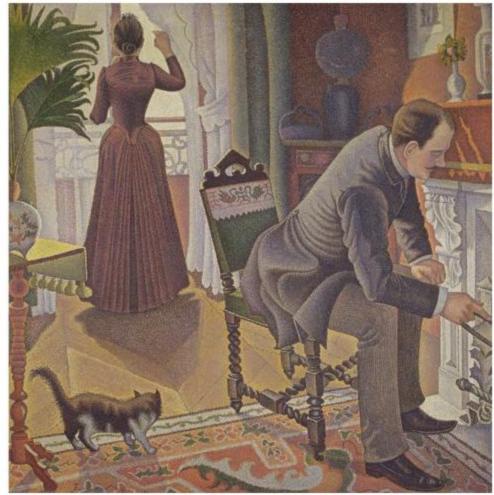
FIGURE 107
Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec,
A Man and a Woman:
Program for "L'Argent," 1895
Bibliothèque nationale de
France, Paris

FIGURE 108
Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec,
Woman in a Corset: A Passing
Conquest, 1896
Bibliothèque nationale de
France, Paris









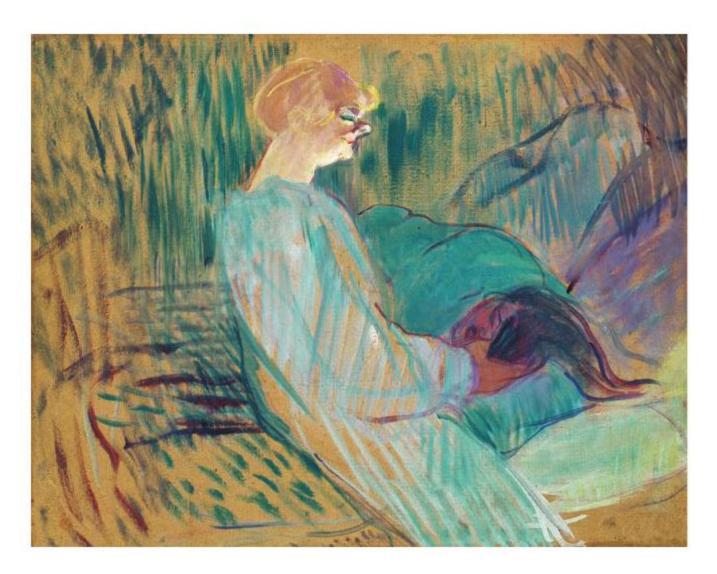
are excluded. The back was also used—as it surely was on stage—to register disjunction between the protagonists, and thus as an active device in a narrative. This is how Caillebotte's Interior (1880, private collection) functions, as does Signac's Sunday (fig. 110), which Lautrec would have seen at the Salon des Indépendants in 1890. The woman's back juxtaposed with the man's insouciance suggests, at best, momentarily divided interests, at worst, some rift. In both cases the back does what Duranty had, in 1876, suggested that it could: convey a sense of social class or mood via the body language. That said, the back's refusal of information—about facial expression particularly—does not help with a certain narrative reading, and it stimulates ambiguity.

There is one further significant aspect of Prostitutes. The pastel presents us with a naked woman physically very close to another female. Should this simply be read as women comfortable in each other's company, or—given Lautrec's fascination with the subject—as a representation of some lesbian liaison? He had been interested in that subject since the early 1890s. In November 1892 two paintings, each showing a female couple in bed, had been exhibited at Le Barc de Boutteville's gallery in Paris, a daring assertion on the part of both artist and dealer of the viability of such a subject.24 That validity was founded on the aesthetic of naturalism, which Lautrec espoused. The central tenet of naturalism, the dominant aesthetic in late nineteenth-century France, was that everything in the material world was of interest and value and therefore worthy of analysis and representation. This belief lay at the core of the novels of Émile Zola and Guy de Maupassant and of the paintings of artists as different as Claude Monet and Jules Bastien-Lepage. Proponents of naturalism in the arts set great store by being scientific, claiming the methodologies of science-scrupulous analysis of data, precise presentation of detail-and following science's exploration of hitherto unexplored areas.25

How does this help us with Lautrec—who, when not making art, was bibulous rather than bookish—and his lesbian pictures? First, these images might be considered in terms of narrative. Three paintings, dating from about 1894, all

FIGURE 109 Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, La Goulue at the Moulin Rouge, 1891–92 Museum of Modern Art, New York

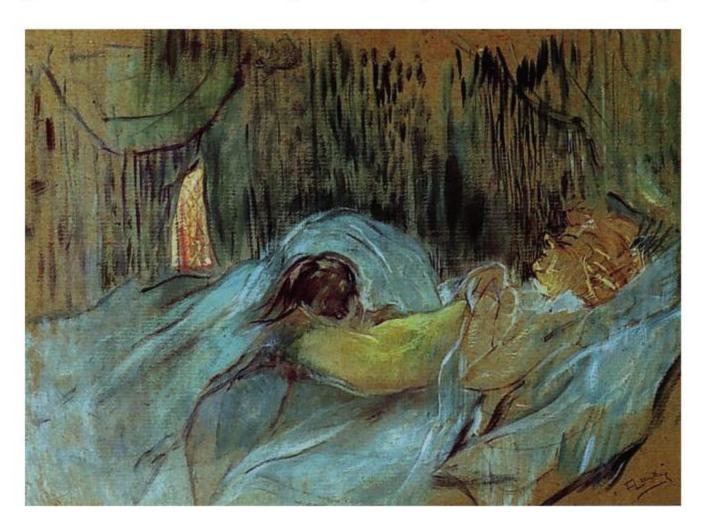
FIGURE 110
Paul Signac, Sunday, 1890
Private collection, Paris



Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, The Divan—Rolande, c. 1894 Musée Toulouse-Lautrec, Albi, France

seem to be of the same models, a fair-haired woman with a retroussé nose paired with a dark-haired woman whose face we do not see (figs. 111, 112, and 113). Also consistent is the handling of paint in all three pictures: rapidly applied, especially in the scantily handled backgrounds with their blue-green striations, and in the swaths of blue-white sheeting in the foreground. On the one hand, these consistencies could merely mean that the paintings were made at much the same time, with at least one and perhaps both models used for all three. On the other hand, one could go further and suggest that the three pictures make an informal sequence: the implicit narrative of each single

FIGURE 112
Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec,
The Brothel in the rue des
Moulins—Rolande, c. 1894
Fondation Bemberg,
Toulouse



painting extending, if one reads them sequentially, across the longer narrative of the triptych, as seduction, love making, and rest. The suggestion here is that Lautrec may have experimented with narrative across three different compositions, using the lesbian subject as a story line.

A second approach—unusual as it may seem—is to link Lautrec's lesbian pictures with science. According to his friend Thadée Natanson, Lautrec was fascinated by perversions and bizarre behavior. In particular, Natanson remembered, Lautrec enthusiastically asked a companion to tell him at length about Richard von Krafft-Ebing's Psychopathia sexualis. The recollection is entirely plausible. Lautrec knew several doctors well, among them his cousin Gabriel Tapié de Céleyran and his own flat-mate Henri Bourges. Krafft-Ebing, a German doctor, had published Psychopathia sexualis in 1886. It was modern, ground-breaking research on extreme human sexual behavior, using the

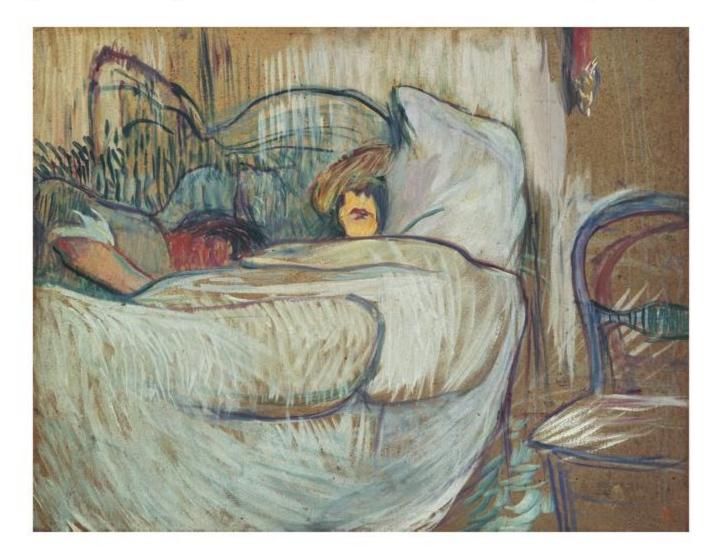


FIGURE 113 Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, In Bed, c. 1894 Musée Toulouse-Lautrec, Albi, France

methodology of the case study. Under a particular category—shoe-fetishism, for example—Krafft-Ebing would give a cursory chronological and narrative account of the symptoms and their presentation in a specific patient. Lautrec may just have relished stories of human strangeness. But one suspects that there was more to his interest in Krafft-Ebing's book than that.

In about 1894 or 1895 Lautrec made a number of paintings of lesbian couples. These paintings, which are more finished than the trio just considered, show two women reclining on a bed or couch, in close, intimate, but not interlocked contact. Their surroundings are minimal, the better to concentrate the spectator's attention on the faces and body language of the women. In some of the paintings, one of the faces is turned away or half obscured so that we have to guess from the gestures, and the reactions of the second figure, what the expression on that face might be. Each of these paintings sets up a different, nuanced, narrative. In *The Two Friends* (c. 1894–95, Zurich, Bührle Foundation),<sup>27</sup>



FIGURE 114
Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec,
Women Resting, c. 1894–95
Galerie Neue
Meister, Staatliche
Kunstsammlungen Dresden

the two women close on each other, apparently with mutual intent, although the slightly clenched fingers of the foreground figure perhaps suggest a certain edge to her anticipation. In a second painting with the same title, The Two Friends (1895, private collection), 28 which is the most finished and depicts the couple lounging on yellow cushions, the reclining figure, one forearm held across her forehead, seems rather cautious about her friend's advances. In The Sofa (c. 1894-95, New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art),29 there might be some kind of stand-off between the two women. And in Women Resting (fig. 114), the two figures turn quite away from each other, as if the naked woman has repudiated or been angered by the seated woman in the foreground. Here Lautrec juxtaposed the naked and the clothed, and "played the back," as he does in Prostitutes. There is no single, certain way of reading any of these paintings, but each is a mini-narrative, setting up a subtle, if only suggested, moment in an unfolding erotic story. This brings us back to Krafft-Ebing's case studies. Take Case 176, Miss X (aged fifty-five). When she was twenty-seven, "a girl [had] approached her with unequivocal proposals, expatiated on the senselessness of refusing, gave a full explanation of the homosexual instinct which mastered her, and stormed furiously at her. Patient bore this girl's caresses but did not admit her to any sexual intimacy in so doing, as she felt that sexual intimacy without passionate love was repulsive."30 What Lautrec may well have drawn from what he was told of Krafft-Ebing's work was that sense of psychological instincts and sexual imperatives functioning as the narrative of a negotiation between couples fraught with ambiguities and contradictions. Lautrec's lesbian paintings are far from scientific and certainly did not derive directly from any text. It seems plausible that he was encouraged or justified by the crossdisciplinary example of Krafft-Ebing in his exploration of the psychological nuances of the erotic instinct.

We have considered narrative, the naked and the nude, the theatrical and "playing the back," and a modern psychological text. Where does that leave Prostitutes? In this pastel, narrative is not clear. The naked woman might be

looking into a drawer or handling something on the surface of a piece of furniture; her elbows are in the right position to suggest either. The clothed woman might possibly be helping her or simply conversing. It appears that there is an easy intimacy between the two, but not necessarily any more than that. There is no suggestion of disjunction, nor of any secrecy between the two women. But there is a detachment from us, as in other narratives in which the back is used as a blank, undemonstrative obstacle between the spectator and the protagonist of the picture. Prostitutes is unlike Woman in a Corset: A Passing Conquest, where, despite the woman's turning her back, the narrative of physically assertive female and attentively absorbed male is well established. Nor is it like La Goulue at the Moulin Rouge, where we can easily guess the narrative of predatory women on the trawl. Prostitutes does not function quite like the overtly lesbian paintings, in which Lautrec used a particular sexual proclivity as a script for exploring psychological nuance. In those pictures, Lautrec had his models act out particular relationships and responses, so the lesbian pictures are to a certain extent performed, theatrical. By turning both to Antoine's practice as a theatrical director and to Krafft-Ebing's Psychopathia sexualis, one can adumbrate how Lautrec's art looked outward, drawing from other disciplines to stimulate and deepen his work. Prostitutes remains a subtle and suggestive image of domesticity and sisterhood in grim surroundings, combining remarkable draftsmanship and idiosyncratic chromatics with nuanced associations with the worlds of the theater and of psychology, and revealing Lautrec as an artist of wider range than such a straightforward motif would at first suggest.

- 1. Joyant 1926-27, 152.
- For example In the Salon (Au Salon, 1893, New York, Guggenheim Museum) and Au Salon de la rue des Moulins (In the Salon of rue des Moulins, 1894, Albi, Musée Toulouse-Lautrec); see Dortu 1971, P.500 and P.560.
- R. Thomson 1991a, 408–409.
- For example, Deux Femmes faisant un lit (Two Women Making a Bed, 1893, private collection) and La Partie de cartes (Telling Fortunes, 1893, private collection); see Dortu 1971, P.503 and P.505.
- 5. Ibid., P.551 and P.544.
- 6. Ibid., P.495.
- 7. Ibid., P.542.
- 8. Stead 1957, 145-46.
- 9. Huysmans 2006, 247.
- 10. Rostrup 1977, 7-13.

- Femme qui tire son bas (Woman Pulling up Her Stocking), c. 1894, Albi, Musée Toulouse-Lautrec; see Dortu 1971, P.553.
- 12. Ryan 1991, 418-19.
- 13. Duranty 1986, 44, 45.
- 14. Distel 1995.
- Antoine 1921, 117;
   Henderson 1971, 52–53.
- 16. Francisque Sarcey, "Chronique théâtrale," Le Temps (Paris), 17 October 1887; Charnow 2005, 99–100.
- R. Thomson 2004, fig. 78,
   p. 94.
- 18. "Grouille, remue et s'agite en un brouhaha très vivant . . . c'est ainsi que M. Antoine aurait sans doute procédé" (Robiquet 1893, 315).
- Adriani 1988, nos. 56 and 106.
- 20. Ibid., no. 63.

- 21. For different readings of Elles, see R. Thomson 1991b, 436–37; Saint-Germier 1992, 74–83; and R. Thomson 2005, 209.
- 22. Adriani 1988, nos. 171, 176, 177, and 180.
- 23. Femme nue de dos dans un intérieur (Nude Woman in an Interior, Seen from Behind); see Pissarro and Snollaerts 2005, vol. 3, no. 1064. The drawing is Nu féminin debout (Standing Female Nude, 1895, Cambridge, Fitzwilliam Museum).
- Both, Au Lit: Le Baiser (In Bed: The Kiss, 1892, private collection); Dortu 1971, P.436 and P.438.
- 25. R. Thomson 2012, 247.
- Natanson 1951, 79.
- 27. Dortu 1971, P.602.
- 28. Ibid., P.598.
- 29. Ibid., P.601.
- 30. Krafft-Ebing 1965, 358.



# Symbolist Profusion

Léon Frédéric's Nature or Abundance

DOROTHY KOSINSKI

Let us begin directly with a detailed visual analysis of this monumental late nineteenth-century painting that is simultaneously captivating and disquieting (figs. 115 and 116). The colors are dazzling—gold and lavender, purple, yellow, red, and pink, delicate hues of the new shoots of spring among the dark brown-green of hardened vines. This Madonna-Gaia-Natura emerges amid a mountain of luscious vegetal material and four robustly muscular children. The plentitude and variety of blossoms, grains, fruit, straw, leaves, and flesh create a kaleidoscopic intensity clearly intended to astound and disconcert. This effect is only amplified by the hallucinogenic quality of the apocalyptic heavens in which stars, sun, moons, and planets are buffeted by clouds and streams of air ranging from happily buoyant to fiercely menacing. There is a point at which Natura's blue-gray diaphanous veil fuses with this celestial realm. We are dazzled by the painterly bravura, the precision, the ambition of this painting . . . and then we are confused. Where do we find our bearings?

Astonishingly, Natura's body is barely visible, almost entirely subsumed by the flowers and fruits and the four children. She seems to consist entirely of the gigantic vertical mound of vegetable matter, a radical metaphor of fecundity. Although only her face, a shoulder, a breast, two hands (and a glimpse of her left knee and the grimy toes of her right foot?) are visible, part of our discomfort is derived from a pervading sense of her nudity. Her fleshly physicality, despite the opulent, obscuring veil of abundance, is powerfully present in the realistic clarity of the depiction of the woman's face and breast. Her facial features are distinct, beautiful but not idealized. Perhaps this is a portrait of an intimate acquaintance—wife, sister, model?—whose features the artist knew by heart and had studied again and again. He captures her slight imperfections and distinctive qualities—slightly bulbous nose, tiny bumps or moles, ruddy patches and rosy cheeks, the bluish discoloration around eyelid and eye socket, the pursed lips of her smile. Her right breast, offered to the suckling child, is rendered with equally realistic precision. The breast is engorged and distended, the nipple is erect, the aureole large and discolored, creating an image of intimate, human physicality that is further amplified by the hungry grasp of the child's hand, fingers indenting her flesh, as his or her mouth prepares to subsume the nipple. The child's face, the child's hand resting on her shoulder—fingernails, knuckles, creases of the skin of the wrist and hand—are depicted with this same hyperrealism.

OPPOSITE FIGURE 115 Léon Frédéric, Nature or Abundance, 1897 Detail of figure 116



FIGURE 116 Léon Frédéric, Nature or Abundance, 1897 Dallas Museum of Art





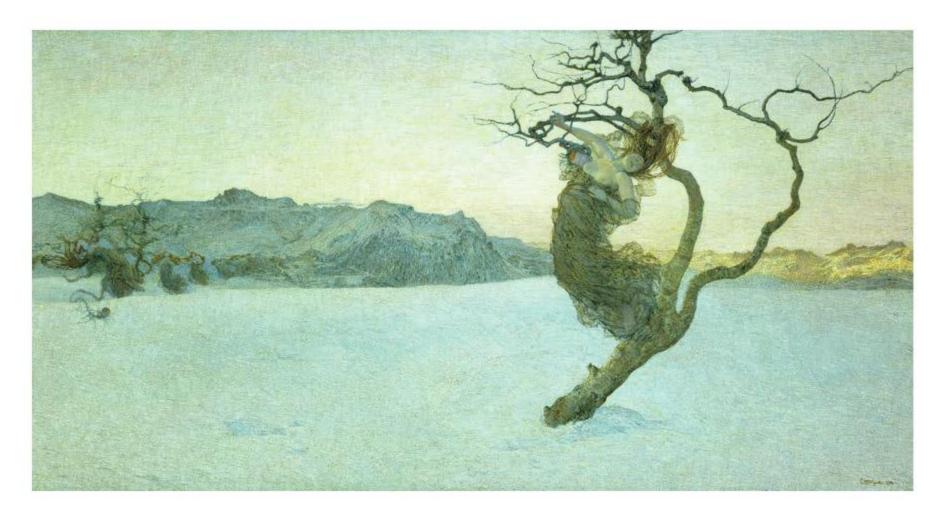




FIGURE 117 Léon Frédéric, The Four Seasons: Spring, Summer, Fall, Winter, 1893 Philadelphia Museum of Art

The four children occupy over half of the composition, although they are most effectively obscured by the profusion of flowers and fruits and vines. Are these children? They are so big. Their bodies are so muscular and strong. They are so tall. They are giants of youthful vigor, strength, promise, and resilience. Their sex is discreetly disguised amid the natural abundance. Each is draped with an array of the vegetation associated with a season, tracking a counterclockwise cyclical movement within the painting, beginning at the upper left, from spring to summer to autumn to winter. There is an elegantly subtle progression from narcissus to morning glory to ripened fruits and heavy grains to drying leaves. This cycle encompasses the nursing child, the youth bedecked with straw and summer flowers, the lazy soporific body of the child amid the grapes and apples, and the huddled child amid the drying vegetation, who seems to seek shelter and turns inward as though desiring the long sleep of hibernation.

The intentionality of the cyclical themes that animate the painting is confirmed by the fact that this canvas was originally conceived as the central and largest panel of five, the others, two at left and two at right, each depicting one of the four seasons (fig. 117). The painting, therefore, must be understood as the central and most important element of a monumental, multipaneled



Giovanni Segantini, Wicked Mothers, 1894 Österreichische Galerie, Belvedere, Vienna

work that borrows the altar format of traditional religious paintings of both the northern European and Italian traditions to convey, at the end of the nineteenth century, a secular, animistic, or symbolist subject.

The painting is titled Nature or Abundance, though its subject might alternatively be described as fertility, fecundity, cycles of life, motherhood, or the irrepressible power of nature. All of these themes were exceedingly popular in nineteenth-century art and literature. A glance at the wonderfully rich catalogue of the exhibition Lost Paradise mounted in Montreal in 1995, for instance, reveals the international range of artists preoccupied with motherhood: Gustav Klimt, Hope I (1903, Ottawa, National Gallery of Canada), Cuno Amiet, Hope (1902, Olten, Switzerland, Kunstmuseum Olten), Pierre Puvis de Chavannes, Maternity (La Jeune Mère) (1887, Paris, Musée d'Orsay), Edvard Munch, Madonna (1895, Oslo, Munch Museet), Giovanni Giacometti, Mother and Child under a Blossoming Tree (1900, Chur, Switzerland, Bündner Kunstmuseum), and Gaetano Previati, Motherhood (1890–91, Novara, Italy, Banco Popolare di Novara). Giovanni Segantini, in Wicked Mothers, explores a sinister, psychologically ambiguous notion of a guilty woman at odds with and punished by nature (fig. 118). The late nineteenth-century obsession with woman's sexuality results in a fascinatingly disparate array of interpretations depicting woman as death, whore, innocent, or instrument of salvation.

This preoccupation with great cyclical schemes (though with less psychological focus) manifests itself in grand cycles of time, nature, life, and age. Rather than embark on a book-length footnote, let us simply reference a few capital examples of this intellectual preoccupation in the visual arts: Paul Chenavard's Social Palingenesis (c. 1848, Lyon, Musée des Beaux-Arts), Gustave Moreau's La Vie de l'humanité (1886, Paris, Musée Gustave-Moreau), Auguste Rodin's Cates of Hell (1880–1917, Paris, Musée Rodin; see fig. 97), Paul Gauguin's Where Do We Come From? Who Are We? Where Are We Going? (1897, Boston, Museum of Fine Arts), and Munch's Dance of Life (1899–1900, Oslo, Nasjonalmuseet for Kunst, Arkitektur og Design). These works reflect an intense drive to craft allencompassing, syncretic systems of development, weaving past, present, and

future, history and personal trajectory, mythology, religion, and mysticism into a hoped-for coherent whole.

Frédéric's stylistic and art historical sources are sufficiently clear. The artist was without doubt aware of the images of Madonna and Child, so rife in his native Flanders, in innumerable churches and museums. Frédéric was born in Brussels in 1856, but lived with relatives in the small village of Uccele until attending a Jesuit boarding school, the Institut des Joséphites, in Melle, near Ghent. He later lived in Brussels and took courses at the Académie royale des Beaux-Arts. There are innumerable precedents in medieval and renaissance art of images of the nurturing Virgin—suckling the Christ Child, holding him close to her cheek, or images of the Madonna of Mercy, sheltering the Christian faithful under her cavernous, thick robes. One might consider two examples from the Uffizi in Florence: Filippo Lippi's Madonna and Child with Two Angels (fig. 119) and Parmigianino's Madonna with the Long Neck (c. 1535). An alternative source is found in images of virtue from classical art, especially Caritas sheltering her children. As a young artist, Frédéric traveled to Italy in 1876, spending more than two years studying in Florence, Venice, Naples, and



FIGURE 119 Filippo Lippi, Madonna and Child with Two Angels, c. 1465 Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence

Rome, accompanied by his countryman the sculptor Julien Dillens. One can hardly avoid thinking of Sandro Botticelli and Domenico Ghirlandaio when observing the face of Frédéric's secular Madonna. Surely another critical influence on Frédéric's stylistic development was his father's training and work as a jeweler, providing him an example of the patient attention to intricate and precise detail so evident in *Nature* and contributing to the intensity and luster of the work. Frédéric was a skilled draftsman and highly attentive to the enamel-like beauty of his canvases.

Frédéric's career reveals the complexity and diversity of artistic trends in Europe and specifically in Belgium in the last decades of the nineteenth century. When he first exhibited in 1879 at the Salon in Brussels he was accurately categorized as a realist painter. He exhibited with the L'Essor circle, a group of artists who embraced realist subjects drawn from everyday life. During the early part of his career, Frédéric's works were rife with scenes of the working poor, perhaps inspired by an annual visit he made to the small village of Nafraiture, in the Ardennes region of Belgium. The Chalk Maker's Family, a major work of this period, was highly acclaimed at the Salon in Brussels in 1882 (fig. 120). This triptych depicts a family of impoverished chalk sellers,



FIGUE 120 Léon Frédéric, The Chalk Maker's Family: Morning, Midday, Evening, 1881–82 Musées Royaux des Beaux-Arts de Belgique, Brussels





setting off to work in the first panel, Morning, resting for a noontime meal in the second, and returning home in the third, Night. The grim details of the barren outskirts of the city, empty fields, and shoeless children amplify Frédéric's empathetic response to the challenges of the working poor. The socially engaged quality of these works is closely comparable to the powerful chalk drawings Vincent van Gogh executed in the Netherlands at Nuenen in 1885. Van Gogh was determined to capture the true character of the peasants, workers, and laborers in the fields, and he returned over and over again to these subjects. He wrote about the centrality of the subject to his aesthetic philosophy: "To show the peasant figure in action, that -I repeat - is what a figure is—essentially modern—the heart of modern art itself. . . . Peasants' and workmen's figures began more as a 'genre' - but nowadays, with Millet, the perennial master, in the lead, that is the very heart of modern art, and so it will remain." Van Gogh points to Jean-François Millet's iconic images of these subjects and to the other masters of this genre, Jules Breton and Léon Lhermitte.



Another context for Frédéric's leaden images of grim peasant life might be Émile Zola's 1887 novel *The Earth (La Terre)*, which relates the story of peasant revolt and violence against the backdrop of agrarian reform and hopeless poverty. In contrast to Zola's descriptions of hot and sweaty labor of the harvest interrupted by mindless violence and brutish sexuality, Frédéric's works are staid, more like ponderous sermons from the pulpit about the quiet dignity and intense struggle of the rural poor and the expression of an idealistic longing for social harmony and unity with nature. Yet another example is Frédéric's Stages of Peasant Life, consisting of five horizontal canvases of frieze-like presentations of figures ranging from children to youths to adults and to the aged (fig. 121). One might compare the latter to Ferdinand Hodler's sad lineup of old men in The Disillusioned (1892, Bern, Kunstmuseum), but Frédéric's paintings have a troubling forensic exactitude, with an obsessive attention to detail that gives them an almost comic air, sadly contradicting any earnest social realist intent.

Frédéric was obviously drawn to the multipaneled series format. He produced, for instance, cycles of charcoal drawings titled Flax and Grain, in which each composition is devoted to a specific stage of agricultural production (1889, Vilvoorde, Belgium, Legrand Collection). He painted yet another naturalist triptych in 1893–97, titled Stages of the Worker's Life, this time focusing on an urban population (fig. 122). The middle composition is a street scene

FIGURE 121 Léon Frédéric, Stages of Peasant Life: The Old People, 1885–87 Musées Royaux des Beaux-Arts de Belgique, Brussels

Léon Frédéric, Stages of the Worker's Life, 1893–97 Musée d'Orsay, Paris









FIGURE 123
Ford Madox Brown,
Work, 1852–65.
Manchester City Art Gallery,
England

bursting with people—young workers and children playing cards in the foreground; robust workers, male and female, behind them; and in the distance, the elderly, and finally a funeral procession. The left-hand panel is devoted to male workers of all ages engaged in intensive labor, toiling in the street. The motif of men wrestling with massive timbers recalls, of course, Christ on the way to Calvary. The right-hand panel is devoted to the sphere of women and children, including a Madonna suckling her baby at her enormous breast, a motif with which Frédéric seems to have been obsessed.3 It has been suggested that an alarmingly steep and sudden decline in the birth rate in late nineteenth-century Belgium may have been the root of the artist's preoccupation with fecundity.4 The Pre-Raphaelites wielded considerable influence in Belgium, and in the case of this particular work by Frédéric, one inevitably thinks of Ford Madox Brown's Work (fig. 123), one of the best-known paintings of its time. (Frédéric and Brown were shown in the same exhibition of Les XX [The Twenty], the exhibition organization that had been brought together in 1893 under the auspices of Octave Maus.) In contrast to Brown's iconic work, however, Frédéric's seems remote from the social and political themes that dominated the headlines as a result of the massive strikes and demonstrations that shook Belgium in the 1880s and 1890s. Instead, Frédéric manipulates the monumentality of the religious altar format and makes clear allusions to traditional Christian iconography to communicate not so much the real-life plight of the peasant and worker, but instead, a fundamental confidence in the inexorable cycles of nature and of human life and an acceptance of the roles of humankind in that natural order.

The themes of farmworker and laborer did not disappear from Frédéric's work in the 1890s, witness such canvases as The Weaver (1896, Brussels, Musées Royaux des Beaux-Arts de Belgique) and The Potato Peeler (1891, Brussels, Thys Collection). Rather, in the last decade of the century Frédéric worked simultaneously on the kind of hyperrealist symbolism that characterizes Nature and was celebrated in numerous international journals including The Studio in Britain and Ver Sacrum in Vienna. Other visionary, idealist canvases include Aurora or Dawn Chasing the Shadows (fig. 124). Here, as in Nature, Frédéric

wields a highly personal combination of classicism and realism to fashion a supercharged image of the formidable goddess of dawn, draped in a dark veil. Another masterwork of Frédéric's symbolist production that bears discussion in connection with Nature is The Stream or The Lake (fig. 125), a monumental triptych that is also concerned with cycles of nature: waking, vitality, and sleep; the arc from birth to death. These elemental cyclical themes are conveyed with uncanny, carnal intensity through the massed bodies of innumerable children, the same rosy, robust, vital, and muscular figures that hover close to the woman in Nature. Here, in moist heaps, they cascade out of mountainous streams as though out of a geological birth canal; they frolic and cavort in gently flowing waters amid verdant forests; they slumber on quiet pools, attended by a troop of swans. Are we witnessing the waking dreams of new parents who are drunk with exhaustion and sheer joy and pleasure in the healthy bodies of their offspring? To the twenty-first-century eye, however, motionless mounds of naked bodies inevitably conjure up images of war, devastation, and mass catastrophe or raise suspicions of some deviant sexual



Léon Frédéric, Aurora or Dawn Chasing the Shadows, by 1892 Private collection

behavior. One is hard put to reconcile Frédéric's mystical-pantheistic-vitalist intentions with our perspective today.

We can only amplify our perplexity with Frédéric by briefly considering The Artist's Studio (fig. 126). The artist depicts himself naked (his tails and top hat carefully laid out on chairs in the background), eyes closed in a trance-like state, with a skeleton (a normal studio prop?) draped in a star-studded diaphanous cloak and perched on his knee. The traditional tropes of the artist's studio—palette and brushes, written text, open window at rear—anchor the composition, but hardly serve to allay the odd intensity of this self-portrait. There is of course a long tradition of the artist portrayed with death, including an immediate precedent, Arnold Böcklin's Self Portrait with Death as the Fiddler (1872, Berlin, Alte Nationalgalerie), though these hardly match the odd sexualized intensity of Frédéric's composition.<sup>5</sup>

Frédéric's simultaneous exploration of socially conscious naturalism and hallucinatory hyperrealist symbolist allegories is perhaps typical of a complex artistic chapter, when post-impressionist style and symbolist subject confronted each other in Belgium in the 1880s and 1890s, a complexity that seems to have eluded successful art historical inquiry. Symbolism virtually disappeared in the twentieth century, only to be taken up again, tentatively, for exhibition and study in the 1960s and 1970s, and with more enthusiasm later. Frédéric was once one of the most renowned artists in Europe, and he showed his work in the major international exhibitions. Nature was shown in Florence in 1897, the year of its execution; in Rome the year after; in the exhibition of La Libre esthétique (the successor to Les XX), also in 1898; in the Grosse Berliner Kunstausstellung in 1903; and at the Saint Louis World's Fair (the Louisiana Purchase Exposition) in 1904 (winning a gold medal). Remarkably, it was to be seen only once (in Rétrospective Léon Frédéric, Palais des Beaux-Arts, Brussels, 1948) in the subsequent seventy years until it was included in the 1972 exhibition Peintres de l'imaginaire; Symbolistes et surréalistes belges, at the Grand Palais in Paris. In the subsequent thirty years, the painting was included in a number of major exhibitions that successfully rehabilitated the reputation of Symbolism, for instance, Belgian Art, 1880–1914 at the Brooklyn Museum in 1980, Lost Paradise at the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts in 1995, and 1900 at the Guggenheim Museum, New York, and the Royal Academy of Arts, London, in 2000.

Léon Frédéric, The Stream or The Lake, 1897–98 Musées Royaux des Beaux-Arts de Belgique, Brussels







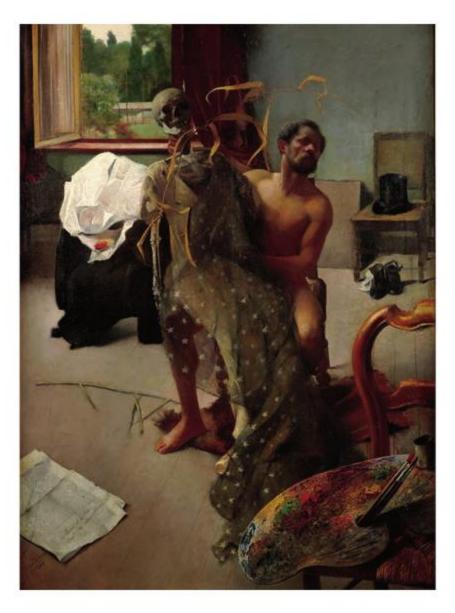


FIGURE 126 Léon Frédéric, The Artist's Studio, 1882 Musée d'Ixelles, Brussels

This brief exhibition history makes plain the protracted disaffection for Frédéric and symbolist painting in general during most of the twentieth century. From this perspective, the purchase in 2007 by the Dallas Museum of Art was a relatively bold acquisition. It reflects a deliberate curatorial strategy to diversify and expand the modest collection of nineteenth-century European painting. The addition of major works by Frédéric, Edward Burne-Jones, Hodler, and Félix Vallotton, for instance, introduced the Pre-Raphaelites and amplified the importance of Symbolism. The aesthetic complexity and rich internationalism of the late nineteenth century are suggested with the addition of works by Belgian, British, and Swiss artists. These acquisitions provide a fresh context that influences our appreciation of the estimable French paintings in the collection, including works by Émile Bernard, Pierre Bonnard, Paul Gauguin, Camille Pissarro, Odilon Redon, Paul Sérusier, and Edouard Vuillard. In embracing this revisionist art history, the Museum's Committee on Collections revealed no small degree of courage and sophistication.

- See Kosinski 1989, especially chapter 2.
- "Het Boerenfiguur in zijn actie te geven, ziedaar wat een figuur is—ik herhaal het—essentieel modern—het hart van de moderne kunst zelf—Het boeren—en werkmansfiguur is meer begonnen als 'genre'—
- maar tegenwoordig met Millet als eeuwige meester voorop is dat het hart zelf van de moderne kunst en zal het blijven" (Gogh 1959, vol. 2, no. 418, p. 401. Also see Kosinski 2006).
- See Mueller 1979.
- See Nochlin 1989.
- See Belgian Art 1980, 103n.28, and the suggestion that this painting was exhibited in a tongue-in-cheek, burlesque 'Zwans' ['joke'] exhibition.
- The acquisition of Nature was made through the Foundation for the Arts with the Mrs. John B.
   O'Hara Fund.



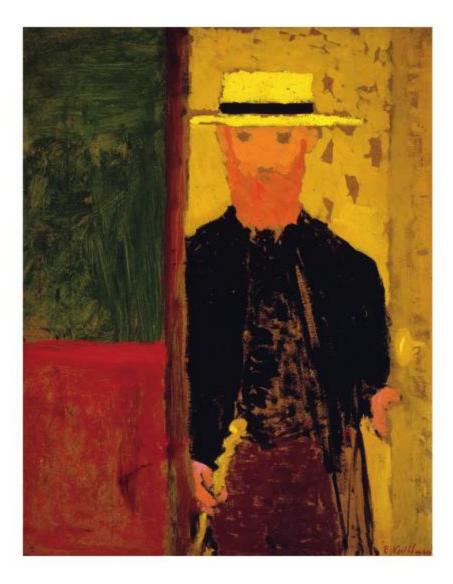
# People in Rooms

Four Paintings by Edouard Vuillard

**BELINDA THOMSON** 

A striking self-portrait can often provide a useful introduction to an artist. Self-Portrait with Walking Stick and Boater (fig. 128), painted when Edouard Vuillard was in his mid-twenties, in about 1891 or 1892, shows a bearded redhead caught in a doorway and about to enter a room. His stylistic approach here involves seeking the simplest forms—flat schematic areas of light and darker tone, bold yet somehow tentative contrasts of black, green, orange, and yellow—to distil his shy yet abrupt personality.¹ This simplicity reflects the sharp jolt that had recently interrupted Vuillard's stylistic development: just a couple of years earlier he had been occupied in emulating the intense realism of Jean-Baptiste-Siméon Chardin's still lifes in the Louvre, using muted, pearly half tones. In 1890, when Vuillard joined the Nabi group, he had embarked, in discussion with other members, notably Paul Sérusier, Maurice Denis, and Pierre Bonnard, on a reappraisal of his whole understanding of art.

OPPOSITE
FIGURE 127
Edouard Vuillard,
The Little Restaurant,
C. 1900–1901
Detail of figure 130



Edouard Vuillard, Self-Portrait with Walking Stick and Boater, 1891–92 Private collection, United States



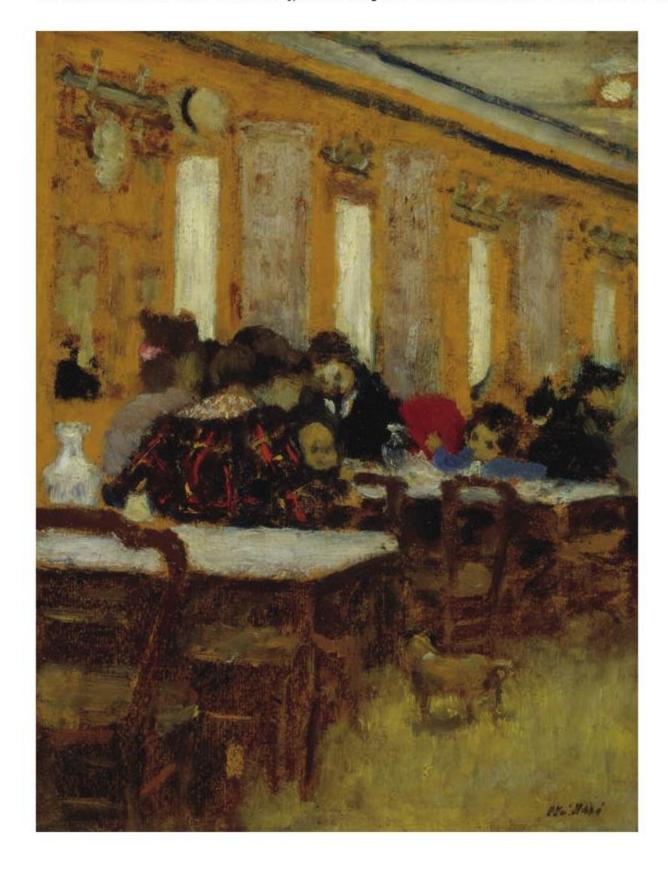
FIGURE 129
Jean-François Raffaëlli,
"We'll give you 25 francs
to start off with," 1883
Private collection

The son of a corset-maker, Vuillard was ever alert to changing fashions, colors, and fabric patterns, as well as to gestures and silhouettes. The permanent observer in company, sketchbook or camera to hand, he was sensitive to the moods of others, able to catch the most momentary exchanges or expressions. The paintings that are the subject of this essay cover a period of less than ten years in Vuillard's career and demonstrate a fascination, common to much of his work, with observing people in rooms. This is true even of The Tent (fig. 138), although it is unmistakably an outdoor scene, for the artist's point of interest is the family group under the makeshift room formed by the striped awning.2 Despite his inclination toward synthetic observation, his paintings give consistent and reliable information about how he and his close circle lived. A hint of that inexhaustible interest in human idiosyncrasy is afforded by a letter he wrote in 1890 to his friend Marc Mouclier, following a visit to the annual Salon. After castigating the artificial, rhetorical poses in a painting of Lady Godiva by their mutual teacher, Jules Lefebvre, Vuillard observed: "there's still a crowd around it, quite an entertaining crowd what's more, with their brightly colored outfits, far more interesting than the paintings and fun to look at from a comfortable seat; I have promised myself to go and spend some enjoyable moments there from time to time, thanks to your pass."3

One wonders whether, at that same Salon of 1890, Vuillard's eye was drawn to a painting by Jean-François Raffaëlli, an artist who had previously exhibited with the impressionists. The painting (fig. 129) was part of the artist's series called Ménages sans enfants (Households without children), and the title, doubling as caption, read: "We'll give you 25 francs to start off with." The subject is easy to grasp: the hiring of a new maid, and the stiff elderly couple her future employers. This kind of anecdotal naturalism had become de rigueur for certain Salon painters, a sure way of intriguing the spectator, and by thus playing to the popular audience, Raffaëlli showed his true colors as a narrative painter. In his Définition du néo-traditionnisme, published in August 1890, and which came to be seen as the credo of the Nabi group, Denis took potshots at certain naturalist artists at the Salon who, he judged, had forgotten the essential truth of his opening proposition, namely, "that a painting, before it is a warhorse, a nude or some anecdote or other, is essentially a flat surface, covered with colors

arranged in a certain order." Denis took Raffaëlli's painting, in particular, to task: "only the caption interests me, for I am repelled by the ridiculousness of this meticulous rendering of unattractive people and grotesque furnishings." While Vuillard certainly took Denis's main arguments to heart—concurring with his admiration for Puvis de Chavannes, for instance—he must have found this attack on anecdotal naturalism more of a challenge, for painting ordinary-looking people in rooms stuffed with grotesque furnishings was precisely what interested Vuillard. His solution would be to approach the subject in a way that did not try to tell a story—or at least only in the most ambiguous, open-ended way—but, rather, conveyed an emotion and took the spectator by surprise, revealing unsuspected visual and psychological interrelationships.

Vuillard's earliest works almost all deal with his intimate family, in particular his mother and his unmarried sister, Marie, with whom he lived. We see them in casual conversation or at mealtimes (for instance, *The Chat* [1892, Edinburgh, Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art] or *Dinnertime* [1889, New York, Museum of Modern Art]), in simplified color schemes of black, white,



Edouard Vuillard, The Little Restaurant, C. 1900–1901 Dallas Museum of Art

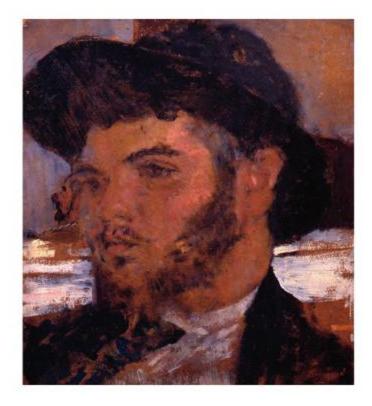




FIGURE 131 Edouard Vuillard, Portrait of Cipa Godebski, 1897–99 Private collection

FIGURE 132
Misia Natanson Playing with
the Baby on the Steps of
Le Relais at Villeneuve-surYonne, photograph by
Alfred Natanson, 1899
Private collection

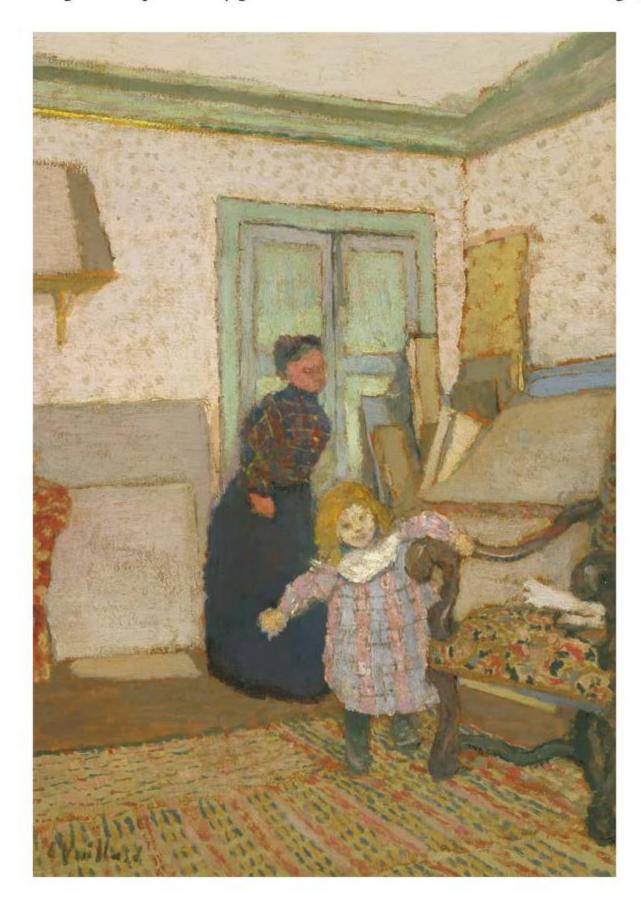
and rich brown, the definition of forms lost in his approximate touches of paint or exaggerated in bulky or hollowed-out silhouette. By his use of synthetic means, Vuillard effectively avoided that meticulousness of detail that Denis found so irksome in Raffaëlli, and already we sense his burgeoning appetite for psychological drama. Indeed theater was an art form in which Vuillard was steeped. A close friend of the actor-manager Aurélien Lugné-Poe, Vuillard was a founding member of Lugné's Théâtre de l'Oeuvre, attending performances several times a week and designing programs and sets. The challenge for Vuillard over the coming years would be how to sustain that highly strung vision, that nervous ambiguity of form he achieved in the early 1890s, without slipping into the pedestrian and the overly detailed.

In The Little Restaurant (fig. 130), we are presented with people in a room that is also a public space: a sizable dining room, with its row upon row of identical marble-topped tables and regularly spaced tall windows. It should be read as a daytime scene since the regular shafts of light mark windows punctuating the back wall. Vuillard focuses our attention on the young family at the second table, a woman in tartan dress with her back to us, a man in a dark jacket and a bowler hat, and two children, one on the woman's knee, the other in blue facing us from across the table (fig. 127). Given the simplicity of the restaurant, no tablecloths, simple wooden chairs, this establishment was in all likelihood a popular eating house offering a prix-fixe menu. There were many such establishments in Paris, particularly around the boulevards of the Right Bank, in the 1890s.\*They had a regular turnover of clientele, with several sittings for lunch and dinner. So it is in the sense of its modesty rather than capacity that one should understand the title Le petit restaurant, which is original to Vuillard's day.

This family—with its little dog, tail aquiver, standing expectantly on the right—can, I believe, be identified as that of Cipa Godebski, the younger half brother of Misia Natanson. Cipa, a musician and composer, is seen here with his wife, Ida, or more likely, with his sister, Misia, and his two children, Mimi and Jean, an identification supported by a comparison of the man's facial features with a number of other portraits of Cipa (fig. 131). Vuillard was obviously fond of this young man, who seems to have slept a lot (three of Vuillard's portraits show him in bed) and was inseparable from his soft black trilby hat. With this identification, the previously assumed date, 1897, is clearly too early for this painting: Mimi was not born until 1899 and Jean a year or so later. The Even the

little dog is identifiable. From various photographs taken by Vuillard and by Alfred Natanson of Misia at Le Relais, Villeneuve-sur-Yonne (fig. 132), it is possible to identify the dog in the Dallas picture with hers. Equally characteristic is her style of dress, a plaid-patterned smock with a white lace collar and leg-of-mutton sleeves." Vuillard's photography, resulting in album upon album of small, square, black-and-white snaps, began in earnest in the later 1890s, when he acquired a Kodak box camera, and it offers the historian a convenient documentation of his relations with the Natansons at Villeneuve-sur-Yonne."

In order to situate the second painting, *The First Steps* (fig. 133), chronologically, one needs to look back at certain earlier paintings Vuillard made of the Roussels, his sister and brother-in-law's family. In 1894 Vuillard's sister, Marie, married his close friend Ker-Xavier Roussel, a fellow Nabi. Vuillard had played a not inconsiderable role in making this match and may have sensed a certain weight of responsibility given the troubles that soon beset the marriage. After



Edouard Vuillard, The First Steps, 1900 Dallas Museum of Art

FIGURE 134 Edouard Vuillard, Sketch for "The First Steps," 1900 Private collection



the loss of their first-born son in infancy, the birth of Annette in November 1898 brought immense delight. In Woman Playing with a Child (1900, private collection), Vuillard depicts Annette with her grandmother Madame Vuillard, who has perched the child on a dining chair and is keeping her amused with some private game probably involving a magnifying glass. The high-angled viewpoint allows Vuillard to enter into the intimacy of grandmother and baby that he was so pleased to witness. In a contemporary photograph we see the pride and pleasure his mother took in holding her granddaughter, a rare glimpse of her features unmediated by her son's brush. About a year elapsed between that photograph and the painting in Dallas, which although undated was clearly made in 1900 and records the early, tottering steps of Annette. The setting is the apartment Vuillard shared with his mother in the rue Truffaut, just north of the boulevard des Batignolles in Montmartre.

A small preliminary sketch, probably done hastily in a notebook, gave Vuillard the essential elements of the composition (fig. 134). The title is unlikely to have been his own—indeed it smacks of a sentimentalizing impulse on the part of an early owner and is slightly misleading since these do not look like the child's very first steps. 15 In French Realist painting, that subject had a certain pedigree, of which Vuillard would surely have been aware. Jean-François Millet made a conté crayon drawing (c. 1858, Laurel, Mississippi, Lauren Rogers Museum) of a child's first steps that inspired Vincent van Gogh's variant, painted in 1890 (New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art). The usual identification of the woman in this painting with the child's mother also seems wrong: I am convinced it is once again her grandmother Madame Vuillard, who is watching the toddler. 16 From 1899 the Roussel family lived just outside Paris at L'Étang-la-Ville, near Versailles. When Vuillard's sister, Marie, wanted to run errands in the city, it was clearly convenient to leave the child with her own mother in Montmartre, hence the frequent presence of Annette in Vuillard's turn-of-the-century paintings, tottering around the artist's studio, a highly unsuitable but intriguing play area.

The room depicted was the main room in the rue Truffaut apartment, which was entered, from a small vestibule, through the double doors to be seen in *The First Steps* and served as a salon-cum-studio. We see how cluttered







FIGURE 136
Edouard Vuillard, The
White Room, 1899–1900
Private collection

it was with canvases and rolls of paper. It was a light room, much lighter than Vuillard had hitherto been used to, with two large French windows opening onto an expansive view." In a contemporary portrait of his mother by the window in this same room, Madame Vuillard Sewing, rue Truffaut (c. 1900, Lausanne, Musée Cantonal), one sees foliage and plenty of ambient light although the window's aspect was northeast facing. A black fireplace at the far end of the room features in many paintings of this date. In Woman Sitting near a Fireplace (1900, Zurich, Bührle Foundation), where the edgy-looking visitor in black street attire might be a model come for an interview, we see the double doors of the Dallas painting reflected in the overmantel mirror. The room was the setting for several paintings of hired models, who sometimes posed for nude studies, among them one of a model preparing herself to take up a pose: Model Undressing in the Studio, rue Truffaut (fig. 135).

The sagging bracketed shelf to the left of the door in The First Steps ran the length of the inside wall, above a sofa upholstered in an orange fabric. There were two Louis XIII style chairs in the room, upholstered in different patterns—the mottled one provides Annette with her cruising anchor point, the striped one is the chair favored by Madame Vuillard. There were also a bentwood rocking chair, a small, low armchair, and a couple of unmatched wooden dining chairs. The floor covering—a mat or rag rug of a loose, crisscross weave—is another recognizable feature, helping one distinguish pictures of this room. For example, it appears in the painting The White Room (fig. 136), which, in the catalogue raisonné is misleadingly entitled The White Bedroom, although clearly it is a salon or studio that is depicted. Once again, Vuillard's mother is stolidly seated with the baby Annette on her lap. Marie is poised, with hat on, about to go out—it is probably that delicate moment of good-byes when one hopes not to upset the child. Behind Madame Vuillard's chair is the unmistakable and practical detail, a child's potty. Marie's relative height in relation to the double doors offers further proof that the figure with Annette in the Dallas painting is the diminutive grandmother, not the slightly taller mother. Both paintings are a delicate symphony of off-whites, drabs, and grays, here enlivened by the high note of coral.

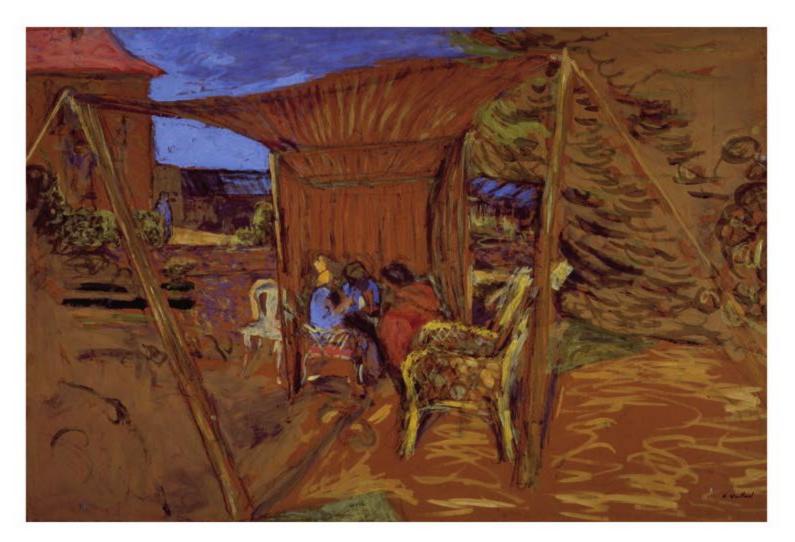
Interior (fig. 137), the third painting from the Dallas collection to feature people in a room, represents an upstairs bedroom in the Roussels' house in



FIGURE 137 Edouard Vuillard, Interior. Madame Vuillard and Grand-mère Roussel at L'Étang-la-Ville, c. 1900–1901 Dallas Museum of Art

L'Étang-la-Ville. This three-story house with its beamed ceilings was known as La Montagne because of its slightly raised position. It offered a flavor of the countryside that Roussel exploited to the full in his own painting. Vuillard, too, would make the most of the views from those windows, in particular the delightful verdant view over a sloping garden toward the forested ridge of Saint-Cloud.20 In the painting, light spills into the room, reflecting off the half-open French window and hitting the floor, casting the two figures into contre-jour (backlighting) and projecting the shadow of the woman seated on the left. The artist observes the chance reflection of a picture in the mirror of the wardrobe and the different play of light on the three wallpapered surfaces to the right, the lower section of ceiling indicating a half landing perhaps. The figures have been identified as Annette's two grandmothers, Madame Vuillard and Madame Roussel, and certainly Madame Vuillard's back view, to the left of the composition, is unmistakable. Like The Little Restaurant, it has Vuillard's preferred support of cardboard, which is left bare in many areas, establishing the overall warm tonality of the palette.

The latest and largest of Vuillard's painted rooms is *The Tent* (fig. 138), painted in 1908. The painting, of a makeshift room supported by drunkenly leaning tent poles, captures the impression of a windswept and somewhat chaotic summer scene. Thanks to Vuillard's habit of making detailed pencil sketches (figs. 139 and 140) and taking photographs, we can reconstruct the subject with some precision. The so-called tent has not, as one might have imagined, been erected on a beach, but in the garden of the house glimpsed at the left, presumably to provide a sheltered and shaded place to sit. The child here is identifiable as Denise Natanson. In a contemporary photograph (fig. 141) we see little Denise on the knee of a stylishly dressed woman who has previously been identified as Lucy Hessel, but does not look like her. She could possibly be Denise's mother, Marthe Mellot (wife of Alfred Natanson), or, more likely, Marcelle Aron, Lucy Hessel's sister. The setting is Le Pouliguen,



a seaside resort in Brittany, which adjoins the popular resort of La Baule. The house, Ker Panurge, is shown in a postcard of the time, and we can see how imposing it was. Rented for the summer by the Natansons, with their two daughters and nanny, it was big enough to accommodate their usual group of friends, Lucy and Jos Hessel, the Arons (Lucy Hessel's sister, Marcelle, and her husband, Sam Aron), Tristan Bernard (a great friend of the late Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec and lover of Marcelle Aron), and Romain Coolus, not to mention Vuillard, the semiofficial painter of the company. This rarefied, somewhat bohemian, house party represented the crossover between the worlds of Parisian art and theater: Marthe Mellot was an actress, Natanson, Bernard, and Coolus were all playwrights. The group took joint holidays but rarely visited the same place or rented the same property twice, and much time was spent over long meals in the garden. We know this because Vuillard was there, ever the astute observer. The conversation, quick-witted and saucy, fueled the dialogue of Bernard's and Coolus's boulevard comedies, some of which were undoubtedly composed during these summer vacations. In her memoirs, Annette Vaillant,

FIGURE 138 Edouard Vuillard, The Tent, 1908 Dallas Museum of Art

Edouard Vuillard, Studies for "The Tent," 1908 Dallas Museum of Art







Marcelle Aron or Marthe Mellot and Denise Natanson, photograph by Edouard Vuillard (?), 1908 Private collection

the eldest of the two daughters of Alfred Natanson and Marthe Mellot, recalled 1908, when she was aged seven and Denise about four, as a particularly hot summer. Because of the proximity of the house to the beach, the usual social rules were relaxed and she was allowed to play on the sand with the children of a large family of more ordinary social background.<sup>23</sup>

Ever the bachelor and peripatetic vacationer at the mercy of his friends' whims, Vuillard conveys the implicit uncertainties of his own social position in The Tent, whose charm lies in its provisional, chaotic appearance: a member of the petit bourgeois class, Vuillard was an outsider looking in on this brilliant but friable world of the stage and new money. What is striking about this image is its paper support, now a brownish color, and daringly slapdash technique involving a broad brush and distemper. A large area of the foreground is indicated with the merest slashes of arabesque paint, leaving much of the support untouched. Several views of Le Pouliguen painted that same summer show the same basic palette, paper support, and broad handling, and one senses that Vuillard found a new freedom on these occasions.24 Sadly, the next time Vuillard was to go to La Baule was in June 1940, when he had already suffered a series of heart attacks. With his friend Lucy Hessel, he was caught up in the mass exodus from Paris following the German invasion and the French armistice. It is often said that the shock of these tragic events was the final straw for Vuillard, and he died in La Baule, aged seventy-two.

An interesting comparison can be made between The Tent and Maurice Denis's September Evening (fig. 142), one of many paintings prompted by the beaches of Perros-Guirec in northern Brittany, where he and his family spent their summers. Painted in 1911, it demonstrates the degree to which Denis had by then set his course on a measured, ordered classicism that is essentially outward-looking in contrast to the spontaneity and inward-looking sociability that lay at the heart of Vuillard's aesthetic. In 1898, when Denis was in Rome, the two artists had argued the point in letters, Denis upholding his belief in classical order and restraint, Vuillard holding fast to his essentially impressionist belief

in "sensation." It was expressing his immediate response to the thing seen, Vuillard maintained, that gave him his greatest satisfactions as a painter. <sup>25</sup> This exchange is one of the rare published instances of the intellectual tussles that engaged Vuillard and helped form his individualistic aesthetic.

By contrast with his old friend Denis, who, with the satisfaction of a paterfamilias, observed and took inspiration from his own family, the intimacy Vuillard observes in his interiors is often a fragile affair; and as a perpetual onlooker, his place in these sociable settings must have felt somewhat insecure and on the edge. But marginality served Vuillard well. His great insight was surely this: that we denizens of the northern hemisphere all inhabit rooms throughout our lives; they are the setting for our daily exchanges and emotional encounters. We even, and perhaps instinctively, re-create makeshift rooms out of doors in order to feel comfortable. It was an insight that accounts for the intimate satisfaction the viewer feels on slowly unpacking his complicated paintings of interiors, one that served Vuillard for the remainder of a career in which people in rooms remained the most important and distinctive theme.



Maurice Denis, September Evening, 1911 Musée des Beaux-Arts, Nantes, France

- The prevailing, somewhat oversentimental, view of Vuillard's gentle disposition has been challenged recently by Guy Cogeval in Salomon and Cogeval 2003.
- The Garden of La Muette à Passy, Paris (La Muette, c. 1906–1907, Dallas Museum of Art), which is omitted from the discussion, does not fit that description.

It dates from 1906 and is one of a series of vertical decorative panels recording street scenes in Paris, in this case the western suburb of Passy, where Vuillard and his mother were living until 1908. A daringly pared-down vertical composition, The Garden of La Muette is in a sense a reprise of his earlier

decorative project and first public success, Jardins publics (1894), a scheme of nine panels painted for Alexandre Natanson; five of the nine are in the Musée d'Orsay in Paris. Another painting by Vuillard in the collection of the Dallas Museum of Art (Chestnut Trees, 1894–95) also falls into the category of decorative projects, as

- it was conceived as the cartoon for a stained-glass window produced by Louis Comfort Tiffany in 1895, part of a suite of Tiffany windows commissioned from Nabi and other avant-garde artists by the dealer Samuel Bing. The ambition to paint decorations was part of the aesthetic of the Nabi group to which Vuillard belonged, and his commissions came first from the theater, then almost exclusively from private clients. He was often closely involved, professionally and personally, with this circle of patronage.
- Vuillard to Marc Mouclier, May 3, 1890, private collection, reproduced by courtesy of A. Bonnafous-Murat and Dennis Cate.
- "Se rappeler qu'un tableau-avant d'être un cheval de bataille, une femme nue, ou une quelconque anecdote—est essentiellement une surface plane recouverte de couleurs en un certain ordre assemblées" (Denis 1890/1993, 5).
- 5. "Dans les Ménages sans enfants: la légende seule m'intéresse (on vous donnera 25 fr. 50 pour commencer): car le ridicule d'un rendu minutieux de sales têtes et de grotesques ameublements me repousse . . ." (ibid., 16). For a recent analysis of Denis's article, see Thomson and Thomson 2012, 260-67.
- See Salomon and Cogeval 2003, vol. 1, nos. IV-134 and IV-2.
- 7. See Sidlauskas 1997.

- The Grand Restaurant
   Universel in the boulevard des Italiens, for instance, offered breakfast at a fixed price of two francs; Karl Baedeker, Paris and Environs: Handbook for Travellers, 1900, 16.
- For Vuillard's paintings of Cipa in bed, see Salomon and Cogeval 2003, vol. 1, nos. VI-16, VI-17, and VI-18.
- 10. In 1910, Maurice Ravel dedicated his delightful piano suite Ma mère l'Oye to Mimi and Jean Godebski, who were raised in an exceptionally musical household.
- See, for instance, Vuillard's photograph of Misia Natanson in the drawing room of the villa Le Relais at Villeneuve-sur-Yonne; Salomon and Cogeval 2003, Vol. 1, pp. 490-91.
- See the exhibition catalogue Easton 2011.
- See Salomon and Cogeval 2003, vol. 2, no. VII-54.
- Reproduced in ibid., vol. 2, p. 557.
- 15. Vuillard's titles were almost always nonspecific, usually no more than a generic Interior.
- 16. His sister, Marie Roussel, is the woman identified in Salomon and Cogeval 2003 and in the records of the Dallas Museum of Art.
- 17. I had the opportunity of visiting this apartment in 1990 when working on an exhibition about the artist; see B. Thomson 1991.
- See Salomon and Cogeval 2003, vol. 2, no. VII-181.
- 19. Ibid., vol. 2, no. VII-212.
- The two large decorative panels Vuillard painted in 1899 for Adam Natanson

- (the father of Alfred and Thadée) were inspired by the view from the windows of La Montagne: First Fruits (Pasadena, California, Norton Simon Foundation) and Landscape: Window Overlooking the Woods (Art Institute of Chicago). They are collectively known as verdures, since they follow the form of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century verdure tapestries; see ibid., vol. 2, nos. VII-63 and VII-64.
- 21. Ibid., vol. 2, no. VIII-238, as The Marquee (La Tente). It is preceded in the catalogue by a painting of the same date, The Striped Marquee (no. VIII-237, private collection, Geneva), showing the same garden and tent seen from a different angle.
- 22. The caption of this photograph in the Vuillard catalogue raisonné (ibid., vol. 2, p. 937), identifies the woman as Lucy Hessel, but Lucy had a pronounced jawline whereas this woman has a more ovalshaped face.
- 23. Vaillant 1974, 94–95. I had the good fortune to meet Annette Vaillant, then in her late eighties, when preparing an exhibition on Vuillard (B. Thomson 1988).
- See Salomon and Cogeval 2003, vol. 2, nos. VIII-258, VIII-259, VIII-261, VIII-263, and VIII-264.
- 25. See the exchange of letters between Vuillard and Denis in Denis 1957–59, vol. 1, pp. 133–41.

#### Note to the Reader

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Paris: Collection Savoir/
Hermann, 1974.

FIGURE 1. Gustave Courbet, Fox in the Snow, 1860; detail of figure 5

Young Ladies on the Banks of the Seine (Les demoiselles du bord de la Seine), 1856–57. Oil on canvas, 68½ × 81½ in. (174 × 206 cm). Musée des Beaux-Arts de la Ville de Paris, Petit-Palais, Paris, RF 377

© RMN-Grand Palais/ Art Resource Musée du Petit-Palais, Paris, France. Photograph: Bulloz

FIGURE 3. Gustave Courbet, The Quarry (La Curée), 1856. Oil on canvas, 82¾×72¼ in. (210.2×183.5 cm). Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Henry Lillie Pierce Fund, 18.620

Photograph © 2013 Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

FIGURE 4. Gustave Courbet, Battle of the Stags (Le Rut du printemps, combat de cerfs), 1861. Oil on canvas, 131% × 199% in. (355 × 507 cm). Musée d'Orsay, Paris, RF 326

Réunion des musées nationaux/Art Resource, NY. Photograph: Hervé Lewandowski

FIGURE 5. Gustave Courbet, Fox in the Snow, 1860. Oil on canvas, 33¾×50¼ in. (85.7×127.6 cm). Dallas Museum of Art, Foundation for the Arts Collection, Mrs. John B. O'Hara Fund, 1979.7.FA

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the Retreat from Russia (Episode in the Retreat from Russia (Episode de la retraite de Russie), 1861. Galetti, Salon de 1861: Album caricatural (Paris: Librarie nouvelle, 1861); republished in Charles Léger, Courbet selon les caricatures et les images (Paris: Rosenberg, 1920)

Réunion des musées nationaux/Art Resource, NY. Photograph: Tony Querrec Return from Russia (Retour de Russie), 1818. Lithograph, sheet: 17½ × 14¼ in. (44.5 × 36.2 cm). Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven, Gift of Charles Y. Lazarus, B.A. 1936, 1956.3.7

Stag at Bay or Stag Taking to
Water (Le Cerf à l'eau), 1861. Oil
on canvas, 86½×108¼ in.
(220×275 cm). Musée des
Beaux-Arts, Marseille, BA 281

Photograph: © Jean Bernard

FIGURE 9. Gustave Courbet, Bolting Horse (Durchgehendes Pferd), 1861. Oil on canvas, 76 × 89¾ in. (193 × 228 cm). Neue Pinakothek, Munich, 8651

RMN/Art Resource/Bavarian State Painting Collection, Munich

The Death of the Hunted Stag (L'Hallali du cerf), 1867. Oil on canvas, 140 × 199 in. (355 × 505 cm). Musée d'Orsay, Paris, RF 327

© RMN-Grand Palais/Art Resource, NY. Photograph: Agence Bulloz

Renoir, Lise Sewing, c. 1867–68; detail of figure 12

Renoir, Lise Sewing, c. 1867–68.
Oil on canvas, 22 × 18 in. (55.9 × 45.7 cm). Dallas Museum of Art, The Wendy and Emery Reves Collection, 1985.R.59

© Dallas Museum of Art

Renoir, Lise in a White Shawl, c. 1872. Oil on canvas, 22 × 18 in. (55.9 × 45.7 cm). Dallas Museum of Art, The Wendy and Emery Reves Collection, 1985. R.58

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FIGURE 14. Photograph of Lise Tréhot in 1864. Private collection

Renoir, Jules Le Coeur and Clemence Tréhot, 1867. Watercolor on wove paper, 10 × 7 in. (25.2 × 17.6 cm). Dallas Museum of Art, The Wendy and Emery Reves Collection, 1985.R.61

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Renoir, Lise in a Straw Hat, c. 1866. Oil on canvas (later mounted to plywood), 18½×15½ in. (47×38.4 cm). The Barnes Foundation, Philadelphia, BF874

© 2013 The Barnes Foundation, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA/The Bridgeman Art Library

FIGURE 17. Frédéric Bazille, Bazille's Studio, rue de la Condamine (L'Atelier de Bazille, rue de la Condamine), 1870. Oil on canvas, 38 % × 50 % in. (98 × 128 cm). Musée d'Orsay, Paris, RF 2449

Art Resource, NY/Paris, Musée d'Orsay. Photograph: Erich Lessing

Renoir, Diana, 1867. Oil on canvas, 78½ × 51 in. (199.5 × 129.5 cm). National Gallery of Art, Washington, Chester Dale Collection, 1963.10.205

Renoir, Lise (Lise with a Parasol), 1867. Oil on canvas, 72½ × 45½ in. (184 × 115 cm). Museum Folkwang, Essen, Germany, G 144

Art Resource, NY. Photograph: Erich Lessing FIGURE 20. Claude Monet, Camille or The Woman with a Green Dress (Camille ou La Femme à la robe verte), 1866. Oil on canvas, 91 × 59½ in. (231 × 151 cm). Kunsthalle, Bremen, 298.1906/1

Art Resource, NY. Photograph: Erich Lessing

Renoir, The Engaged Couple (Les fiancés), c. 1868. Oil on canvas, 41½×29½ in. (105×75 cm). Wallraf-Richartz-Museum-Fondation Corboud, Cologne, WRM 1199

Art Resource, NY

Renoir, In Summer: Study (The Gypsy), 1868. Oil on canvas, 33½×23¼ in. (85×59 cm). Nationalgalerie, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Al 1019

Bildagentur für Kunst, Kultur und Geschichte (bpk), Berlin/ Art Resource, NY. Photograph: Joerg P. Anders

Renoir, Bather with a Griffon (A Banhista e o Cäo Grifon), 1870.
Oil on canvas, 72½ × 45½ in.
(184 × 115 cm). Museu
de Arte de São Paulo Assis
Chateaubriand, Brazil, 95P

Art Resource, NY. Photograph: Erich Lessing

Renoir, Woman of Algiers (Odalisque), 1870. Oil on canvas, 27½ × 48½ in. (69.2 × 122.6 cm). National Gallery of Art, Washington, Chester Dale Collection, 1963.10.207

Renoir, A Nymph by a Stream, c. 1869–70. Oil on canvas, 26¼ × 48¾ in. (66.7 × 122.9 cm). National Gallery, London, NG 5982

National Gallery, London/
Art Resource, NY

FIGURE 26. Max Liebermann, Swimmers, 1875–77; detail of figure 27

FIGURE 27. Max Liebermann, Swimmers, 1875–77. Oil on canvas, 71¼ × 88½ in. (181 × 225 cm). Dallas Museum of Art, Foundation for the Arts Collection, Mrs. John B. O'Hara Fund, 1988.16.FA

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FIGURE 28. Max Liebermann, Women Plucking Geese (Gänserupferinnen), 1872. Oil on canvas, 47 × 671/2 in. (119.5 × 170.5 cm). Alte Nationalgalerie, Berlin, Al524

Art Resource, NY. Photograph: Erich Lessing

FIGURE 29. Frédéric Bazille, Bathers (Summer Scene), 1869. Oil on canvas, 63 × 63¼ in. (160 × 160.7 cm). Harvard Art Museums, Fogg Museum, Cambridge, Massachusetts, Gift of Mr. and Mrs. F. Meynier de Salinelles, 1937.78

Imaging Department © President and Fellows of Harvard College

FIGURE 30. Thomas Eakins, Swimming, 1885. Oil on canvas, 271/2 × 361/2 in. (69.5 × 92.4 cm). The Amon Carter Museum of American Art, Fort Worth, Texas, Purchased by the Friends of Art, Fort Worth Art Association, 1925; acquired by the Amon Carter Museum of American Art, 1900, from the Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth through grants and donations from the Amon G. Carter Foundation, the Sid Richardson Foundation, the Anne Burnett and Charles Tandy Foundation, Capital Cities/ABC Foundation, Fort Worth Star-Telegram, The R. D. and Joan Dale Hubbard Foundation and the people of Fort Worth, 1990.19.1

FIGURE 31. Gustave Caillebotte, Man at His Bath, 1884. Oil on canvas, 57 × 45 in. (144.8 × 114.3 cm). Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Museum purchase with funds by exchange from an anonymous gift, Bequest of William A. Coolidge, Juliana Cheney Edwards Collection, and from the Charles H. Bayley Picture and Painting Fund, Edward Jackson Holmes Fund, Fanny P. Mason Fund in memory of Alice Thevin, Arthur Gordon Tompkins Fund, Gift of Mrs. Samuel Parkman Oliver—Eliza R. Oliver Fund, Sophie F. Friedman Fund, Robert M. Rosenberg Family Fund, and funds donated in honor of George T. M. Shackelford, Chair, Art of Europe, and Arthur K. Solomon Curator of Modern Art, 1996-2011, 2011.231

Boy Pulling a Thorn from
His Foot, 1st century BCE.
Bronze, height: 28¾ in. (73
cm). Palazzo dei Conservatori,
Rome, Inv. MC1186

Scala/Art Resource, NY

FIGURE 33. Michelangelo Buonarotti, *The Dying Slave*, c. 1513–14. Marble, 82½×28×19¾ in. (209×71×50 cm). Musée du Louvre, Paris, OMV MR 1589

Réunion des musées nationaux/Art Resources, NY. Photograph: René-Gabriel Ojéda

Buonarotti, Crouching Boy, c. 1530–34. Marble, height: 21¼ in. (54 cm). State Hermitage Museum, Saint Petersburg, Inv.n. N.sk-154

Photograph: ©Vladimir Terebenin, Leonard Kheifets, and Yuri Molodkovets FIGURE 35. Aristotele di Sangallo, after Michelangelo Buonarotti, The Battle of Cascina, c. 1542. Oil on panel, 30%×51¼ in. (77×130 cm). Holkham Hall, Norfolk, England

Bridgeman Art Library/ New York

FIGURE 36. Édouard Manet, Isabelle Lemonnier with a Muff, 1879–82; detail of figure 39

Portrait of Madame Brunet, c. 1860–63, reworked by 1867. Oil on canvas, 521/4 × 391/4 in. (132.4 × 100 cm). The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles, 2011.53

FIGURE 38. Édouard Manet, The Tragic Actor (Rouvière as Hamlet), 1866. Oil on canvas, 73¾ × 42½ in. (187.2 × 108.1 cm). National Gallery of Art, Washington, Gift of Edith Stuyvesant Gerry, 1959.3.1

Courtesy National Gallery of Art, Washington

Isabelle Lemonnier with a Muff, 1879–82. Oil on canvas, 36 × 28¾ in. (91.4 × 73 cm). Dallas Museum of Art, Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Algur H. Meadows and the Meadows Foundation Incorporated, 1978.1

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FIGURE 40. Édouard Manet, At the Café, c. 1879. Oil on canvas, 18 15 in. (47.3 × 39.1 cm). The Walters Art Museum, Baltimore, 37.893

FIGURE 41. Édouard Manet, Mlle Isabelle Lemonnier, 1879–82. Pastel on canvas, 22 × 18¼ in. (55.9 × 46.4 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, H. O. Havemeyer Collection, bequest of Mrs. H. O. Havemeyer, 1929. 29.100.56

Image ©The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Image source: Art Resource, NY FIGURE 42. Édouard Manet, Young Lady in 1866, 1866. Oil on canvas, 72% × 50% in. (185.1 × 128.6 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of Erwin Davis, 1889, 89.21.3

Image ©The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Image source: Art Resource, NY

FIGURE 43. Auguste Renoir,
Madame Georges Charpentier and
Her Children, Georgette-Berthe
and Paul-Émile-Charles, 1878.
Oil on canvas, 60½×74½ in.
(153.7×190.2 cm). The
Metropolitan Museum of Art,
New York, Catharine Lorillard
Wolfe Collection, Wolfe Fund,
1907, 07.122

Image © The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Image source: Art Resource, NY

FIGURE 44. Berthe Morisot, Winter (Woman with a Muff), 1880. Oil on canvas, 29 × 23 in. (73.7 × 58.4 cm). Dallas Museum of Art, Gift of the Meadows Foundation, Incorporated, 1981.129

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1855. Albumen print, 3½ × 3½ in. (8.5 × 9 cm). Musée d'Orsay, Paris, PHO1991-2-53

Réunion des musées nationaux/Art Resource, NY. Photograph: Hervé Lewandowski

Manet, Isabelle Diving, 1880. Watercolor on paper, 7% × 4½ in. (20 × 12.4 cm). Musée du Louvre, Paris, RF 11.175

Réunion des musées nationaux/Art Resource, NY

FIGURE 47. Édouard Manet, George Moore in the Artist's Garden, c. 1879. Oil on canvas, 21½×17¾ in. (54.6×45.1 cm). National Gallery of Art, Washington, Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Paul Mellon, 2006.128.24

Courtesy National Gallery of Art, Washington

FIGURE 48. Claude Monet, The Seine at Lavacourt, 1880; detail of figure 49

FIGURE 49. Claude Monet, The Seine at Lavacourt, 1880. Oil on canvas, 384 × 584 in. (98.4 × 149.2 cm). Dallas Museum of Art, Munger Fund, 1938.4.M

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FIGURES 50 AND 51. Claude Monet, The Seine at Lavacourt, 1880; details of figure 49

FIGURE 52. Claude Monet, Luncheon on the Grass (Le Déjeuner sur l'herbe), 1865-66. Oil on canvas, 98 × 85% in. (249 × 218 cm). Musée d'Orsay, Paris, RF 1987 12

© RMN-Grand Palais/Art Resource, NY. Photograph: Patrice Schmidt

FIGURE 53. Claude Monet, La Pointe de la Hève at Low Tide, 1865. Oil on canvas, 351/2 × 59¼ in. (90.2×150.5 cm). Kimbell Art Museum, Fort Worth, Texas, AP 1968.07

FIGURE 54. Claude Monet, A Basket of Apples, 1880. Oil on canvas, 25% × 31% in. (65 × 81 cm). Private collection

Photograph @ Christie's Images/The Bridgeman Art Library

FIGURE 55. Claude Monet, The Ice Floes, 1880. Oil on canvas, 384 × 594 in. (97.2 × 150.5 cm). Shelburne Museum, Shelburne, Vermont, 27.1.2-108

Shelburne Museum, Shelburne, Vermont

FIGURE 56. Claude Monet, Sunset, Lavacourt (Soleil couchant sur la Seine à Lavacourt, effet d'hiver), 1880. Oil on canvas, 39% × 59% in. (100 × 150 cm). Musée des Beaux-Arts de la Ville de Paris, Petit-Palais, Paris, Inv. no. 439

Réunion des musées nationaux/Art Resources, NY. Photograph: Bulloz

FIGURE 57. Claude Monet, View of the Seine, Lavacourt, 1880. Oil on canvas, 24 × 32 in. (61 × 81.3 cm). Fogg Museum, Harvard Art Museums, Cambridge, Massachusetts, U.S.A. Anonymous Gift, 1979.4

© Harvard Art Museum/Art Resource, NY. Photograph: Katya Kallsen

FIGURE 58. Gabriel Amable de La Foulhouze, Sunday at Bellevue, 1874. Oil on canvas, 19 × 31 in. (48.3 × 78.7 cm). Private collection

Photograph @ Christie's Images/The Bridgeman Art Library

FIGURE 59. Edgar Degas, Aria after the Ballet, 1879; detail of figure 64

FIGURE 60. Pierre Louys, Paul Valéry, 1893. Photograph, dimensions not recorded. Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris, D274568

Musée Paul Valéry, Sète

FIGURE 61. Edgar Degas, Self-Portrait in the Studio, c. 1896. Photograph, dimensions not recorded. Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris, RC-A-78996

FIGURE 62. Paul Valéry, Monsieur Teste at the Theater, n.d. Oil on paper, 81/2×11 in. (21 × 28 cm). Musée Paul Valéry, Sète, France, PHOTO 2005-2-1

Musée Paul Valéry, Sète. Photograph: Eric Teissèdre

FIGURE 63. Paul Valéry, Edgar Degas, 1910. Wax, 4 × 2½ × 3½ in. (10.2 × 6.5 × 9.1 cm). Musée d'Orsay, Paris, RF 4461

© RMN-Grand Palais, Musée d'Orsay. Art Resource, NY. Photograph: Hervé Lewandowski

FIGURE 64. Edgar Degas, Aria after the Ballet, 1879. Pastel, gouache, and monotype mounted on cardboard, 23½×29½ (59.7×74.9 cm). Dallas Museum of Art, The Wendy and Emery Reves Collection, 1985.R.26

© Dallas Museum of Art

FIGURE 65. Jules Férat (engraver), Faust, act IV, scene 3: Faust, Mephistopheles and the vision of Marguerite in the Harz Mountains, 1869. Engraving, 8½×12¾ in. (22.5 × 32.5 cm). Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris, FRBNF 42385355

FIGURE 66. Edgar Degas, Ballet Dancers on the Stage, 1887-88. Pastel on paper, 241/4 × 181/2 in. (61.6 × 47.3 cm). Dallas Museum of Art, Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Franklin B. Bartholow, 1986.277

© Dallas Museum of Art

FIGURE 67. E. Flamant, Melina Darde and Adèle Marchisio, students at the Opéra Ballet School, n.d. Bibliothèquemusée de L'Opéra, Paris, Inv. no. 99-B-158969

FIGURE 68. Edgar Degas, At the Theater, Woman with a Fan, 1878–80. Crayon lithograph from transfer paper, 91/4×71/4 in. (23.2 × 20 cm). Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Bequest of W. G. Russell Allen, 60.260

Photograph @ 2013 Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

FIGURE 69. Edgar Degas, Group of Dancers, c. 1894-96. Pastel and gouache on panel, 12×16¼ in. (30.6×41 cm). Dallas Museum of Art, The Wendy and Emery Reves Collection, 1985.R.25

© Dallas Museum of Art

FIGURE 70. Paul Cézanne, Abandoned House near Aix-en-Provence, 1885-87; detail of figure 71

FIGURE 71. Paul Cézanne, Abandoned House near Aixen-Provence, 1885–87. Oil on canvas, 25% × 32½ in. (65.1 × 82.6 cm). Dallas Museum of Art, The Wendy and Emery Reves Collection, 1985.R.11

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FIGURES 72 AND 73. Paul Cézanne, Abandoned House near Aix-en-Provence, 1885-87; details of figure 71

FIGURE 74. Paul Cézanne, House in Provence, c. 1885. Oil on canvas, 25½ × 32 in. (64.8 × 81.3 cm). Indianapolis Museum of Art, Gift of Mrs. James W. Fesler in memory of Daniel W. and Elizabeth C. Marmon, 45.194

FIGURE 75. Paul Cézanne, Pistachio Tree at Château Noir, c. 1900. Watercolor and pencil on paper, 21¾×17 in. (54.2× 43.3 cm). The Art Institute of Chicago, Mr. and Mrs. Martin A. Ryerson Collection, 1937.1030

Photography @ The Art Institute of Chicago

FIGURE 76. Adolph Menzel, Backyard of the Puhlmann House near Potsdam, 1844. Pencil on paper, 4% × 8% in. (12.5 × 20.5 cm). Kupferstichkabinett, Hamburger Kunsthalle, Hamburg, 1959.68

Bildagentur für Kunst, Kultur und Geschichte (bpk), Berlin/ Art Resource, NY. Photograph: Christoph Irrgang

FIGURE 77. Karl Friedrich Schinkel, Long Sheet (Langes Blatt), c. 1823. Pencil and watercolor on paper, 13¼×58¾ in. (33.7×149.2 cm). Kupferstichkabinett, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, SM 41a.42

Bildagentur für Kunst, Kultur und Geschichte (bpk), Berlin/ Art Resource, NY

masonry. Eugène Viollet-le-Duc, Dictionnaire raisonné de l'architecture française du XI<sup>e</sup> au XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle (Paris: B. Bance, 1854–68), vol. 4, p. 12

brick walls. Pierre Chabat, La Brique et la terre cuite... (Paris: Veuve A Morel, 1881), vol. 1, plate 11

The Basket of Apples, c. 1893. Oil on canvas, 25% × 31½ in. (65.1 × 80 cm). The Art Institute of Chicago, Helen Birch Bartlett Memorial Collection, 1926.252

Photography © The Art Institute of Chicago

Apple Harvest, 1888; detail of figure 84

Apple Picking, 1881. Oil on canvas, 25% × 21¼ in. (65 × 54 cm). Private collection, Europe

Photograph courtesy of Richard Green Gallery, London

Apple Picking, 1886. Oil on canvas, 49 1/2 × 50 in. (126 × 127 cm). Ohara Museum of Art, Kurashiki, Okayama Prefecture, Japan, 1008

Bridgeman-Giraudon/Art Resource, NY

FIGURE 84. Camille Pissarro, Apple Harvest, 1888. Oil on canvas, 24 × 29 ½ in. (61 × 74 cm). Dallas Museum of Art, Munger Fund, 1955.17.M

© Dallas Museum of Art

The Apple Harvest, c. 1888.
Watercolor on paper, 6 1/4 × 8 1/2
in. (16.7 × 21.5 cm). Location
unknown

FIGURE 86. Paul Signac, Comblat-le-Château, the Meadow, Opus 161, June-July 1887. Oil on canvas, 24¾×30¾ in. (62.9×77.1 cm). Dallas Museum of Art, The Eugene and Margaret McDermott Art Fund, Inc., in honor of Bonnie Pitman, 2010.14.McD

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Apple Picking, 1878. Watercolor and gouache on paper, laid down on board, 7 × 8 1/2 in. (17.8 × 21.3 cm). Terra Foundation for American Art, Daniel J. Terra Collection, 1992.7. On loan to the Art Institute of Chicago, 152.2005

Art Resource, NY

Osborne, Apple Gathering, Quimperlé, 1883. Oil on canvas, 22½×18½ in. (58×46 cm). National Gallery of Ireland, Dublin, NGI.1052

Photograph courtesy of the National Gallery of Ireland

FIGURE 89. William John Hennessy, Gathering Apples, Normandy, 1884. Oil on canvas, 71 × 40 in. (180.3 × 101.6 cm). Milmo-Penney Fine Art, Dublin, no. 361

Photograph courtesy of Milmo-Penney Fine Art, Dublin

FIGURE 90. Gustave Courbet, Apples, Pears, and Primroses on a Table, 1871–72. Oil on canvas, 23½×28¾ in. (59.7×73 cm). Norton Simon Museum, Pasadena, California, M.1999.2.1.P

Photograph courtesy of the Norton Simon Art Foundation FIGURE 91. Paul Cézanne, Still Life with Apples on a Sideboard, 1900–1906. Watercolor, 18% × 24% in. (47.9 × 62.9 cm). Dallas Museum of Art, The Wendy and Emery Reves Collection, 1985.R.12

© Dallas Museum of Art

The Sirens, c. 1888. Marble, 17 × 17½ × 12 in. (43.2 × 44.5 × 30.5 cm). Dallas Museum of Art, The Wendy and Emery Reves Collection, 1985.R.65

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FIGURE 93. Auguste Rodin, Jean d'Aire, 1895. Bronze (cast early 20th cent.), 81 × 28 × 24 in. (205.7 × 71.1 × 60.7 cm). Dallas Museum of Art, given in memory of Louie N. Bromberg and Mina Bromberg by their sister Essie Bromberg Joseph, 1981.1

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FIGURE 94. Auguste Rodin, Monument to the Burghers of Calais (Monument des Bourgeois de Calais), 1884–95. Bronze, 85½×100¾×69¾ in. (217× 255×177 cm). Musée Rodin, Paris, S.450

© Vanni Archive/Art Resource, NY

FIGURE 95. Auguste Rodin, I Am Beautiful (Je suis belle), 1882. Bronze, 27 × 14 × 11 in. (68.6 × 35.6 × 28 cm). Foundry Alexis Rudier. Dallas Museum of Art, The Wendy and Emery Reves Collection, 1985.R.66

© Dallas Museum of Art

FIGURE 96. Auguste Rodin, The Shade, 1880. Bronze, 38½ × 21×12¾ in. (97.8×53.3×31.5 cm). Foundry Alexis Rudier. Dallas Museum of Art, gift of Mr. and Mrs. Eugene McDermott, 1964.77

© Dallas Museum of Art

FIGURE 97. William Elborne, Upper Part of "The Gates of Hell," c. 1887. Albumen print, 6½ × 7¾ in. (15.5 × 19.7 cm). Musée Rodin, Paris, Ph.2395

Plaster Sketch of the Fenaille
Column, 1984. Plaster, 401/2 ×
91/2 × 141/4 in. (102 × 24 × 36 cm).
Musée Rodin, Paris, S.2137

Photograph: Adam Rzepka

The Poet and the Contemplative Life, 1896. Marble, 72 × 21¾ × 23 in. (182.9 × 55.2 × 58.4 cm). Dallas Museum of Art, The Wendy and Emery Reves Collection, 1985.R.64

© Dallas Museum of Art

FIGURE 100. Auguste Rodin, Mask of Iris, before 1894. Plaster, 7% × 6% × 7% in (20 × 15 × 18.2 cm). Musée Rodin, Paris, S.4154

Photograph: Adam Rzepka

Untitled (The Poet), n.d. Plaster and wax, 6 × 4 × 4½ in. (15.2 × 10.2 × 11.4 cm). Dallas Museum of Art, The Wendy and Emery Reves Collection, 1985.R.67

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FIGURE 102. Auguste Rodin, The Poet and the Siren, 1909. Marble, 32¼ × 26¾ × 19¾ in (82 × 67.7 × 50 cm). Musée Rodin, Paris, S.1420

Photograph: Adam Rzepka

Toulouse-Lautrec, Prostitutes (Femmes de maison), 1894; detail of figure 104

FIGURE 104. Henri de
Toulouse-Lautrec, Prostitutes
(Femmes de maison), 1894.
Pastel on emery board, 23½ ×
19¼ in. (59.7 × 48.9 cm). Dallas
Museum of Art, The Wendy
and Emery Reves Collection,
1985.R.75

O Dallas Museum of Art

FIGURE 105. Edgar Degas, The Toilette after the Bath, c. 1885. Pastel on paper, 311/4 × 22 in. (81 × 56 cm). Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek, Copenhagen, MIN 2724

Photograph: Ole Haupt

FIGURE 106. Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, Woman Pulling on Her Stocking, 1894. Peinture à l'essence on cardboard, 221/4×19 in. (58× 48 cm). Musée d'Orsay, Paris, RF194366

Réunion des musées nationaux/Art Resource, NY. Photograph: Hervé Lewandowski

FIGURE 107. Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, A Man and a Woman: Program for "L'Argent," 1895. Lithograph, 121/4 × 101/4 in. (31.9 × 26.3 cm). Institut nationale d'histoire de l'art, Paris, Bibliothèque, collections Jacques Doucet, cote NUM Mfilm 347 (15,186)

FIGURE 108. Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, Woman in a Corset: A Passing Conquest (Femme en corset: Conquête de passage), 1896. Lithograph, 20½×15¾ in. (52.2×40.1 cm). Institut nationale d'histoire de l'art, Paris, Bibliothèque, collections Jacques Doucet, cote NUM Mfilm 347 (15,337)

FIGURE 109. Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, La Goulue at the Moulin Rouge, 1891–92. Peinture à l'essence on cardboard, 314 x 231/2 in. (79.4 × 59 cm). Museum of Modern Art, New York, Gift of Mrs. David M. Levy, 161.1957

©The Museum of Modern Art/Licensed by SCALA/Art Resource, NY

FIGURE 110. Paul Signac, Sunday, 1890. Oil on canvas, 59 × 59 in. (150 × 150 cm). Private collection

FIGURE 111. Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, The Divan— Rolande, c. 1894. Peinture à l'essence on cardboard, 201/2 × 22¾ in. (51.7 × 56.9 cm). Musée Toulouse-Lautrec, Albi, MTL.174

 Musée Toulouse-Lautrec, Albi, Tarn, France

FIGURE 112. Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec. The Brothel in the rue des Moulins-Rolande, c. 1894. Peinture à l'essence on cardboard, 201/x 271/2 in. (51 x 70 cm). Fondation Bemberg, Toulouse

FIGURE 113. Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, In Bed, c. 1894. Peinture à l'essence on cardboard, 201/2 × 261/2 in. (52) × 67.3 cm). Musée Toulouse-Lautrec, Albi, MTL.175

Musée Toulouse-Lautrec, Albi, Tarn, France

FIGURE 114. Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, Women Resting, c. 1894–95. Peinture à l'essence on cardboard, 231/4 × 31% in. (59.5 × 81 cm). Galerie Neue Meister, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden, Gal.-Nr. 2603

FIGURE 115. Léon Frédéric, Nature or Abundance, 1897; detail of figure 116

FIGURE 116. Léon Frédéric, Nature or Abundance, 1897. Oil on canvas, 65 × 35½ in. (165.1 × 90.2 cm). Dallas Museum of Art, Foundation for the Arts Collection, Mrs. John B. O'Hara Fund, 2007.18.FA

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FIGURE 117. Léon Frédéric, The Four Seasons: Spring, Summer, Fall, Winter, 1893. Oil on canvas, each 49 × 32 3/4 in. (124.5 × 83.2 cm). Philadelphia Museum of Art, Bequest (by exchange) of Mr. and Mrs. Herberg C. Morris, 1993-23-1 to 1993-23-4

FIGURE 118. Giovanni Segantini, Wicked Mothers (Le Cattive madre), 1894. Oil on canvas, 411/4 × 781/4 in. (105.1 × 200 cm). Österreichische Galerie, Belvedere, Vienna, Inv. no. 485

Art Resource, NY/Photograph: Erich Lessing

FIGURE 119. Filippo Lippi, Madonna and Child with Two Angels, c. 1465. Tempera on wood, 37% × 24% in. (95.6 × 61.9 cm). Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence, Inv. 1890 no. 1598

Art Resource, NY/Photograph: Erich Lessing

FIGURE 120. Léon Frédéric, The Chalk Maker's Family: Morning, Midday, Evening (Les Marchands de craie: Le matin, midi, le soir), 1881-82. Oil on canvas, left and right panels: 78¾×45¼ in. (200×114.9 cm); central panel: 781/4×1051/4 in. (200 × 267.7 cm). Musées Royaux des Beaux-Arts de Belgique, Brussels, Inv. no. 3263

 Musées Royaux des Beaux-Arts de Belgique, Bruxelles. Photograph: J. Geleyns

FIGURE 121. Léon Frédéric, Stages of Peasant Life: The Old People (Les Âges des paysans: Les vieillards), 1885-87. Oil on canvas, 451/4×791/8 in. (115 × 201 cm). Musées Royaux des Beaux-Arts de Belgique, Brussels, Inv. no. 3763

 Musées Royaux des Beaux-Arts de Belgique, Bruxelles

FIGURE 122. Léon Frédéric, Stages of the Worker's Life (Les Âges de l'ouvrier), 1893–97. Oil on canvas, left and right panels: 641/2×371/2 in. (163×94.5 cm); center panel: 641/4 × 731/4 in. (163 × 187 cm). Musée d'Orsay, Paris, RF 1152

Réunion des musées nationaux/Art Resource, NY. Photograph: Hervé Lewandowski

FIGURE 123. Ford Madox Brown, Work, 1852-65. Oil on canvas, 54 × 77 1/2 in. (137 × 197.3 cm). Manchester City Art Gallery, England, 1885.1

FIGURE 124. Léon Frédéric, Aurora or Dawn Chasing the Shadows (L'Aurore ou L'Aube arrachant les ténèbres), by 1892. Oil on canvas, 64 × 35 in. (162.6 × 88.9 cm). Private collection

Image © Christie's Images/ The Bridgeman Library

FIGURE 125. Léon Frédéric, The Stream or The Lake (Le Ruisseau ou Le Lac), 1897-98. Oil on canvas, left and right panels: 80% × 50% in. (205.5 × 127.5 cm); center panel: 81¼×111 in. (206×282 cm). Musées Royaux des Beaux-Arts de Belgique, Brussels, Inv. no. 6222

 Musées Royaux des Beaux-Arts de Belgique, Bruxelles

FIGURE 126. Léon Frédéric, The Artist's Studio (L'Interieur d'atelier), 1882. Oil on canvas, 62¼ × 46 in. (158 × 117 cm). Musée d'Ixelles—Museum van Elsene, Brussels, CC 202

© Photograph: Mixed Media

FIGURE 127. Edouard Vuillard, The Little Restaurant (Le petit restaurant), c. 1900-1901; detail of figure 130

FIGURE 128. Edouard Vuillard, Self-Portrait with Walking Stick and Boater, 1891–92. Oil on cardboard mounted on canvas, 141/4 × 111/4 in. (36 × 28.5 cm). Private collection, United States

FIGURE 129. Jean-François Raffaëlli, "We'll give you 25 francs to start off with" ("Nous vous donnerons vingt-cent francs pour commencer"), 1883. (In his oneman show in 1884, Raffaëlli included a subtitle: Intérieur de vieux petits bourgeois en 1883.) Oil on board laid down on panel, 1914 × 251/2 in. (50 × 65 cm). Private collection

FIGURE 130. Edouard Vuillard, The Little Restaurant (Le petit restaurant), c. 1900–1901. Oil on paperboard panel, 19 × 16½ in. (48.3 × 41.9 cm). Dallas Museum of Art, The Wendy and Emery Reves Collection, 1985.R.85

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Portrait of Cipa Godebski, 1897–99. Oil on cardboard, 10 1/2 × 9 1/2 in. (27 × 25 cm). Private collection

Courtesy of the Archives Vuillard, Paris

FIGURE 132. Alfred Natanson, Misia Natanson Playing with the Baby on the Steps of Le Relais at Villeneuve-sur-Yonne, 1899. Photograph. Private collection

Courtesy of the Archives Vuillard, Paris FIGURE 133. Edouard Vuillard, The First Steps (Les premiers pas), 1900. Oil on canvas, 20% × 14% in. (51.8 × 36.5 cm). Dallas Museum of Art, gift of the Estate of Mrs. Barron Kidd, 1994.220

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FIGURE 134. Edouard Vuillard, Sketch for "The First Steps," 1900. Pencil on paper, 5¼×4 in. (13.3×10 cm). Private collection

Courtesy of the Archives Vuillard, Paris

FIGURE 135. Edouard Vuillard, Model Undressing in the Studio, rue Truffaut, c. 1903. Oil on cardboard, mounted on cradled panel, 24% × 33% in. (62.7 × 86 cm). Private collection

Courtesy of the Archives Vuillard, Paris The White Room (La Chambre blanche), 1899–1900. Oil on cardboard, 181/8 × 221/4 in. (46 × 57.8 cm). Private collection

Courtesy of the Archives Vuillard, Paris

FIGURE 137. Edouard Vuillard, Interior. Madame Vuillard and Grand-mère Roussel at L'Étang-la-Ville, c. 1900–1901. Oil on cardboard, 20 × 26 ½ in. (50.6 × 67 cm). Dallas Museum of Art, gift of the Meadows Foundation Incorporated, 1981.137

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FIGURE 138. Edouard
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The Wendy and Emery Reves
Collection, 1985.R.83

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Edouard Vuillard, Two Studies for "The Tent," 1908. Pencil on paper, left: 3½ × 5¾ in. (8.3 × 13.7 cm); right: 3½ × 3½ in. (8.3 × 9.8 cm). Dallas Museum of Art, The Wendy and Emery Reves Collection, 1985. R.84

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(?), Marcelle Aron or Marthe Mellot and Denise Natanson, 1908. Photograph. Private collection

Courtesy of the Archives Vuillard, Paris

FIGURE 142. Maurice Denis, September Evening (Soir de septembre), 1911. Oil on canvas, 51½×70½ in. (130×180 cm). Musée des Beaux-Arts, Nantes, 1949 914.1.1.P

Réunion des musées nationaux/Art Resource, NY. Photograph: Gérard Blot

#### Note to the Reader

Page references in italics denote illustrations. To distinguish them from works of art, publications are annotated with the date of publication. To distinguish objects with the same title, the titles are annotated with the date on which each object was made. The names of artists and architects are annotated with life dates.

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Published by the Dallas Museum of Art

Distributed by Yale University Press, New Haven and London www.yalebooks.com/art

Dallas Museum of Art www.DMA.org

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Edited and indexed by Frances Bowles

Proofread by Laura Iwasaki

Designed and typeset by Hal Kugeler

Color management by Prographics, Inc., Rockford, III.

Printed and bound in Canada by Friesens

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Dallas Museum of Art.

Impressionism and Post-Impressionism at the Dallas Museum of Art: The Richard R. Brettell Lecture Series / edited by Heather MacDonald; with contributions by Richard R. Brettell, André Dombrowski, Stephen F. Eisenman, Paul Galvez, John House, Richard Kendall, Dorothy Kosinski, Antoinette Le Normand-Romain, Nancy Locke, Belinda Thomson, Richard Thomson and Paul Hayes Tucker.

pages cm

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-0-300-18757-1

 Impressionism (Art) 2. Postimpressionism (Art) 3. Dallas Museum of Art. I. MacDonald, Heather (Heather Eleanor) II. Title.

N6465.I4D35 2013 709.03'44—dc23

2013012498

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Impressionism and Post-Impressionism at the Dallas Museum of Art offers a series of intimate case studies in the history of nineteenth-century European art. Inspired by a series of public lectures given at the Dallas Museum of Art between 2009 and 2013, the volume comprises twelve beautifully illustrated essays from leading academics and museum specialists. Opening with a new reading of one of Gustave Courbet's great hunting scenes, The Fox in the Snow, and ending with an exploration of a group of interior scenes by Edouard Vuillard, each essay stands alone as a richly contextualized reading of a single work or group of works by one artist. The authors approach their subjects from a range of methodological perspectives, but all pay close attention to the experience of making and viewing works of art.

Distributed by Yale University Press for the Dallas Museum of Art

